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ORIENTAL SERIES

# JAPAN

ITS HISTORY, ARTS, AND  
LITERATURE

BY  
CAPTAIN F. BRINKLEY

VOLUME III  
JAPANESE TYPES



J. B. MILLET COMPANY  
BOSTON AND TOKYO





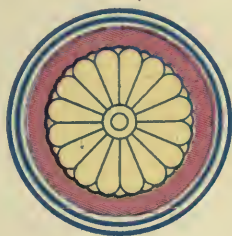
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## ITS HISTORY ARTS AND LITERATURE

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### Chapter I

#### REFINEMENTS AND PASTIMES OF THE MILITARY EPOCH (*Continued*).

**A**NOTHER aristocratic amusement of the Military epoch was the "comparing of incenses" (*Kô-awase*). This particular product of Japanese civilisation has hitherto evoked only ridicule from the few foreign writers who have made any reference to it.<sup>1</sup> Apparently it presented itself to them under no guise except that of a frivolous game, designed to test the delicacy of men's sense of smell by requiring them to distinguish between the aromas of various kinds of incense. Even when thus interpreted, the pastime is not more childish than many of the diversions that hold the attention of grown persons at social *réunions* in Europe and America. But the *Kô-awase* was not merely a

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 1.

question of smelling incense: it was a literary pursuit, designed in great part for testing the players' knowledge of classical poetry and their ability to apply the knowledge. Burning incense had been fashionable in Japan long before the Military epoch. As early as the seventh century, the names of twenty-four varieties of fragrant wood were known and used, the prince of them all being *ranjatai*, a quantity of which was imported by the Emperor Shomu (724-748) and placed in the temple Todai-ji. After the establishment of the military administration at Kamakura, it became the custom that each *Shōgun*, on receipt of his patent from the Throne, should repair to the temple, and cut off a small portion of the incense for his own use. The celebrated Ashikaga chief, Takauji, performed this ceremony with much state, and even the bluff soldier Oda Nobunaga did not neglect it. Not yet, however, had the pastime of "listening to incense" — a devotee never spoke of "smelling" or "sniffing" but always of "listening" — been elaborated into the form afterwards so fashionable. Shino Sōshin, who flourished at the beginning of the sixteenth century, is regarded as the "father" of the pursuit, but it had undoubtedly received a great impulse from that king of dilettante, Ashikaga Yoshimasa, and his *protégés* Shukō and Soami, the founders of the tea cult. Now, for the first time, compound incenses began to be manufactured, so that the disciples of the Shino



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school recognised sixty-six distinct kinds, all distinguished by names derived from literary allusions. A great authority of later times alleged that the use of compound incenses was confined to the Court aristocracy, military men always preferring a simple kind; but that rule seems to have received only limited recognition. Briefly stated, the outlines of the pastime were these. Three varieties of incense were taken and divided into three parcels each. A fourth kind was then added, making ten packets. This method of division was so invariable that the game came to be designated by the term *Jissbu-ko*, or "ten varieties of incense." The units of each subdivided group were numbered from one to three, and each group was indicated by one of the names "plum," "pine," "bamboo," "cherry," "snow," or "moon," but the supplementary, or undivided, incense received invariably the title of "guest." The players having been formed into parties, a stick from each of the subdivided groups of incense was placed in a censer and passed round to be "listened to" by way of trial, the name being declared, but the "guest incense" was never tried. Thereafter portions were taken from each group indiscriminately, and the players had to identify the names by the aroma only, writing down the result of their identification. The most accurate identifications constituted a partial title to victory, but to each incense a literary name had to be given in addition to its identification, and by the

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erudition and ideality displayed in choosing names the contest was ultimately decided. For example, each side having made a correct identification, one was found to have chosen the name "moonlight on a couch ;" the other that of "water from the hill," the former being derived from the couplet

When autumn's wind breathes  
Chill and lone my chamber through,  
And night grows aged,  
Dark shadows of the moonlight,  
Cast athwart my couch,  
Sink deep into my being;

while the second was taken from the verse,

Stream with scented breast  
From flower-robed hills that flowest,  
Here thy burden lay,  
Thy freight of perfumed dew-drops  
Sipped from sweet chrysanthemum.

Between these two names the judgment was that, concerning the second, it was comparatively commonplace, the scent of flowers being an every-day simile in praising incense ; whereas the first, while its derivation had no material allusion to anything suggestive of incense-burning, conveyed a rarely forcible idea of the profoundly penetrating influence of a fine aroma. Victory, then, went to the first. Sometimes the names were not necessarily taken from classical literature but were invented by the players. Thus,

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at a contest in Yoshimasa's Silver Pavilion, one side chose the name "flowers of the Law," the other "sanderling;" and the judgment was that though the flight of the sanderling across the chill skies of winter and its plaintive voice induce reflections on the uncertainty of life, the expression "flowers of the Law" at once inclines the heart towards the all-merciful Buddha and fills the soul with pure yearning. The verdict, then, was in favour of the latter. One more illustration may be given. At another contest the names selected were "myriad-fenced" and "Miyoshi moor," the former having the signification "primal verse," since the earliest couplet on record in Japan contained the word "myriad-fenced," and the latter being an indirect allusion to the cherry-blossom for which Miyoshi is famous. The judgment was that an ancient couplet could not be supposed to retain its perfume, whereas the cherries of Yoshino were even then scenting the sunbeams.

Even this brief notice shows that the pastime signified a great deal more than the mere smelling of different kinds of incense. It may be regarded as supplementary to the couplet-composing compositions (*uta-awase*) mentioned in a previous chapter, the one being intended to test original literary ability, the other to determine literary knowledge. Every social usage that has grown to maturity in Japan shows traces of elaborate care bestowed on it by generation after

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generation of refined practice. The incense pastime illustrates that fact almost as strikingly as the tea cult. It may be said to have a literature of its own. Volumes have been compiled setting forth the exact principles that should be observed in the competition and explaining the numerous modifications that the game underwent from time to time. The various incenses were divided into groups according to the seasons. Thus for spring there were the "white plum incense," the "aged plum," the "blossom and snow," etc.; for summer, the "flower petal," the "green plum," the "iris," the "orange," etc.; for autumn, the "waning moon," the "maple leaf," the "Weaver" (Vega), the "double chrysanthemum," etc.; and for winter, the "evening rain," the "early plum," the "first snow," the "frosty night," and so on. Then there were incenses suggesting love — the "arm pillow," the "waking from sleep," the "sweet face," the "dishevelled hair," etc.; there were miscellaneous incenses, — the "smoke of Fuji," the beautiful "Yokihi," the "myriad fences," — and there were many incenses called after famous places. The pastime itself took various forms, each of them deriving its name from some recondite motive. For example: the anchorite Kisen, who lived on Mount Mimaro beside the Uji River, composed a thousand poems and threw nine hundred and ninety-nine of them into the stream, finding one alone worthy of preservation.



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This idea of infinite eclecticism suggested the name *Uji-yama* (Mount Uji) for a special kind of incense competition. Again, it had been from time immemorial an aristocratic amusement that ladies should go in search of flowers peeping through the snow on the plains of Kasuga and Sagano. Hence the identification of certain incenses having the names of early wild flowers written on their envelopes, was called "little flower incense." Another quaint variety was the "small birds incense," in which, instead of identifying incenses by numbers, they were indicated by duplicated syllables in a bird's name. Thus, if the second and third specimens in a group had been detected by the "listener," he wrote *bototogisu* (nightingale), because the same syllable, *to*, occurs in the second and third numbers of the word. If the specimens detected were the third and fourth, he wrote *isbitataki* (wag-tail), the duplication of *ta* giving the indication, and so on. There were also two variants of the game, called the *Gem-pei* (Minamoto and Taira) and the "horse race" incenses, each of which proceeded exactly after the manner of the Western "race game," a successful identification being marked by the advance of a flag or a puppet through a certain number of squares towards the goal. Many others might be described, but it will be enough to add that there was a minute code of etiquette to be observed in conducting the pastime; that even here the ubiquitous

"Book of Changes" made its appearance, the order of the male and female principles being strictly observed, and that the implements used in preparing and burning incense were of the most exquisite workmanship and costliest material. There are no finer specimens of lacquer to be found than the boxes in which were kept the censers, miniature chopping-blocks, mallets and knives; tiny tongs and spatula of gold or silver; elaborately chiselled silver stands for the instruments; marking-board of silver, gold, and vermilion lacquer, or of finely carved mother-of-pearl, and envelopes of illuminated paper. Incredible sums were paid for a choice set of implements in a rare box. The censer, above all, attracted attention. It might be of gold, or of iron inlaid with gold or silver, or of porcelain. The most highly prized of all kinds was *céladon* of the peculiar tint known as the greenish blue seen between the clouds after rain in summer — the *u-kwo-tien-tsing* of the Chinese *fo-yao*. One of these tiny vessels, named the "sanderling censer," because its delicate colour recalled the plaintive note of that bird flying across winter moonlight, was in the possession of the *Taikō* and enjoyed the credit of protecting him against all danger. On another censer of the same ware Tokugawa Iyeyasu borrowed a sum of ten thousand pieces of gold to meet a sudden need.

The *Kô-awasa* had its frivolous aspects, of course; it would not otherwise have been a



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game. But some credit may be claimed for a society which occupied itself with such refined pastimes rather than with roulette, faro, or poker.

Another remarkable outcome of the Military epoch was the art of flower arrangement. The name applied to it, *ike-bana*, or "living flower," explains at once the fundamental principle of the art; namely, that the flowers must be so arranged as to suggest the idea of actual life,—must look as though they were growing, not as though they had been cut from their stems. In the Occident flowers, whether grouped in bouquets or placed in vases, are disposed with a unique view to colour effect. They are crushed together in glowing masses, delighting the barbaric sense of colour but preserving no semblance of the conditions of their living existence. From a decorative point of view the Western method has much to recommend it. But its scope is narrow, and when compared with the art as practised in Japan, the great advantages of the latter are necessarily recognised. The Japanese considers that the beauty of a plant or a tree is not derived from its blossoms more than from the manner of their growth. The curve of a bough, the bend of a stalk, has for him a charm equal to that presented by the shape of the petal and the tint of the blossoms. Hence in arranging flowers he seeks to retain all the graces that they possess in their natural condi-

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tion. His grouping of them is a composition wherein linear effects are as much studied as colour harmonies. It is not necessary, indeed, that colour should enter into the scheme at all, except in so far as it enters into every natural picture. A tree's foliage may be regarded as its flowers, and not the least beautiful productions of the *ike-bana* deal solely with branches and leaves. This art is essentially Japanese. A Buddhist origin has been attributed to it by some, on the ground that the idea of preserving the living aspect of a flower is derived from the Buddhist veto against taking life. Such an explanation seems fanciful and far-fetched. It is true that vases containing sprays of lotus formed an essential element in the altar furniture of Buddhist temples, and that such decorative objects, having been entirely absent from *Shintō* paraphernalia may have been introduced to the Japanese for the first time by the propagandists of Buddhism. That hypothesis is confirmed by examination of the floral compositions attributed to Prince Shotoku and the religious teachers of the seventh and eighth centuries. They show all the essentially non-Japanese features of the art, being, in short, sprays and boughs symmetrically disposed on either side of a central standard. The floral compositions of Indian, Persian, and Grecian decorative art obey the same rule, symmetry by equipoise; whereas the fundamental principle of Japanese decorative art,

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as well as of Japanese floral arrangement, is symmetry by suggestion. What the Buddhists imported from India was a method based on equality of distribution. What the Japanese themselves conceived was a method based on balance of inequalities. There can be little doubt that the conception was derived from close observation of nature's fashions, and that the wide vogue its practice attained was due primarily to the *bonsai* cult, which, as already described, grew out of the great æsthetic movement of the fifteenth century. It is, indeed, to the celebrated painter Soami, whose name is so closely connected with that movement, that the Japanese attribute the new departure, and it was at the Silver Pavilion, where the cults, of the *Cha-no-Yu* and the *Kô-arwase* may be said to have been evolved, that the art of *ike-bana* received its first great development. But though the theory and something of the practice were due to Soami, his pupil, a priest named Ikenobo, is justly credited with having elaborated the principles and canons of the art into something like an exact science. Thereafter many men of taste made contributions to the cult, until finally it came to possess a code of its own, accurate and consistent, but not without disfigurement of excessive detail. Here, too, as in the case of landscape gardening, the philosophy of the *yang* and the *ying*, the male and the female principles, obtruded itself; not with any transcendental significance,



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however, but merely for the purpose of extending even to flower arrangement the application of the law that nature delights in balance, and that she contrives it primarily by the association of correlated pairs. If the study of Japanese *ike-bana* be approached with a constant recollection of its basic rule, namely, that a state of vigorous vitality and actual growth must always be simulated, the elaborations of the art became easy to comprehend. Evidently the first requirement of such a rule is that the floral or leafy sprays should spring naturally and strongly from the vase containing them, and out of that necessity there grew various forms of "holder," as well as a series of directions for adapting each arrangement of flowers or branches to the shape of the vase and to its position in a room. Following the indications of nature, the next point was to determine what combinations of plants or flowers were permissible, and also to fix those appropriate for each reason. Here, however, the influence of tradition and even of superstition made itself felt, lucky or unlucky attributes being assigned to certain flowers and trees, partly in consequence of historical or mythological associations, and partly because of poisonous properties supposed to belong to them. Every one having even a passing acquaintance with Japanese decorative art is familiar with the trio, pine, bamboo, and plum, so often found in combination

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and so perennially beautiful and harmonious; but without special study of the *ike-bana* cult it could not be inferred that there is an exact list of proper combinations and improper combinations, and that the flowers appropriate for occasions of congratulation in each month of the year as well as for all ceremonials, social, religious, sad, or joyful, are exactly catalogued. Another consideration governing combinations was that "strong" sprays (trees) must not be placed on either side of "weak" (plants), or *vice versâ*, because, in the first place, such compositions would show mathematical symmetry, and, in the second, they would violate the true principles of natural balance. A still more important law was that of lineal distribution. It has been well said that "the floral decorations of Japan are synthetic designs in line, in which every individual stem, flower, and leaf stands out distinctly silhouetted."<sup>1</sup> Appreciation of lineal grace seems, indeed, to be a specially developed faculty among the Japanese. Evidences of it are displayed in every branch of their art, and it found expression from the first in the *ike-bana* science. Three-lined, five-lined, and seven-lined compositions were designed, forming what may be called the skeletons of all arrangements. The directions and inter-relations of their curves were carefully mapped out; their relative lengths were approximately

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 2.

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determined so as to secure harmonious balance, and explicit vetoes were formulated against faults of interference, confusion, entanglement, or parallelism. As for receptacles, they were in themselves a science. Mr. Conder describes and depicts no less than forty-six varieties of bamboo vases alone, each of which has a distinct appellation and a definitely approved shape. Then there were bronze vases, porcelain vases, pottery vases, basket vases, boat vases, bell-vases, wooden vases, bucket vases, chariot vases, suspended vases, standing vases, umbrella vases, margin vases, hooked vases, flower horses, and flower cabinets, each having its appropriate varieties of floral arrangement. The scope of the art is well illustrated in the case of the boat vase, which, according to the description of the sprays placed in it, was made to represent a homeward-bound ship, an outward-bound ship, a ship-in-port, a swiftly-sailing ship, or a branch-laden ship. It will readily be supposed that attention had to be paid to environment in designing a floral composition. Every article and every part of a Japanese chamber is regarded as a co-operative element in a general scheme of decoration, and each must enhance the value of the rest. Hence a vase of floral or leaf sprays standing or hanging in an alcove is required to harmonise with the picture hanging beside it, and even to be in accord with the landscape presented by the nearest portion of the garden



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outside. There is also a philosophy of the art. It is supposed to educate certain moral qualities in those that practise it sincerely ; to wean them from earthly thoughts ; to lighten the burdens of life ; to impart gentleness and courtesy to the demeanour, and to purge the heart of selfishness. It has its rival schools, and some of them have sought to win credit by imparting esoteric elements into their methods. But such things are mere unessential mannerisms, entirely distinct from the cult itself.

To these refinements of life specially developed in the Military epoch may be added those bequeathed from previous ages, — flower-viewing at all seasons, even in winter, when, by a pretty fancy, the snow was regarded as the bloom of the time and the “silvered world” became a landscape garden ; moonlight picnics in autumn ; pulling young pines at the New Year ; fishing with hand-nets ; mushroom-picking parties ; maple gathering ; *go* ; chess ; couplet composing ; football, and so forth. Foot-ball merits special notice, for it attained extraordinary vogue. It had the honour of being classed with poetry-writing as one of the “two ways,” and noblemen took as much pride in excelling in it as ever Anglo-Saxon youths did in gaining fame at cricket or baseball. Great families, families which enjoyed an hereditary title to such offices as councillor of State and minister of justice, constituted themselves professional instructors of the art, and the

enclosure of the office of Public Roads was assigned by the Imperial Court as a foot-ball ground. It will readily be inferred from what has been already written about the cults of the *Cha-no-Yu*, the *Kô-awase* and the *Ike-bana*, that the pastime of kicking a ball came to have its exact rules and even its esoteric mysteries, the latter extravagances being inventions of rival schools which sought to win popularity by appealing to the superstitions of the time. The ordinary foot-ball ground of orthodox kickers took the form of a square, its side either twelve, sixteen, or twenty-four yards, and at its four corners a pine-tree, a bamboo, a maple, and a willow were planted. If these dimensions were exceeded, six pine-trees replaced the varieties just mentioned. Two noble families, however, special repositories of the arcana of the game, enjoyed the estimable privilege of setting up a pine-tree and a post at each corner, and of enclosing the ground with a fence of crossed bamboos. A code of minute regulations governed the apparel of the players, — robes, head-gear, sandals, stockings, and fans, — and another code indicated the proper postures of the body, — the movements of the hands, the paces of the feet, the expression of the face; the pose of the hips; the spread of the step; the recover; the side kick; the fore kick; the separate kick; the extra-tree kick; the numerical kick, and the indefinite kick — all were clearly prescribed. In short, foot-ball became a cult, and even the

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physical strength that it demanded was decorously and elegantly exercised.

Gambling, which in the Nara and Heian epochs had been regarded as a somewhat vulgar pastime, prevailed extensively under the Military regimen. From the General officer to the transport coolie, almost every one was addicted to this vice. Usually dice were employed, but sometimes shells took their place, the hazard depending upon the faces exposed by the shells when thrown. Money was wagered also upon the game of *go*, and it is recorded that the ranks of the vagabond and burglar classes received large accessions, owing to the ruin which constantly overtook devotees of these various games. An attempt made by the Kamakura rulers at the zenith of their power, in the middle of the thirteenth century, failed to check the abuse, and at a later period the *samurai* fell into the habit of staking their arms, armour, and horse-trappings on a cast of the dice, so that men would go into battle with helmets and no cuirasses, or in partial panoply without swords. Finally (in the middle of the fourteenth century), the vice prevailed so extensively that a fully equipped soldier, from the medium grade downward, was rarely seen in the fight. One effect of the abuse was that men began to think robbery more respectable and less dangerous than going into battle with deficient arms or armour. They took what they wanted wherever they could find it, and presently the



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right of property received so little respect that articles not in their possession were staked by gamblers, the loser pledging himself to steal them. Even the storehouses of temples and shrines were not safe against raids by unsuccessful gamesters, though not infrequently the winner of a sum of money sought to make reparation for previous acts of lawlessness by employing his gains to build or furnish a store for the sometime victim of his burglary. It has to be noted in partial extenuation of this disorderly conduct, that it was due, in some degree, to the contempt entertained by the military class for the other orders of the people, and that the priests, by their violence and extortion during the Heian epoch, had conferred on the men of the Military age a kind of right of retaliation. A *samurai* never thought of helping himself to the belongings of a comrade. He obeyed the theory that all sections of the nation were bound to contribute to the support of the military man, and that the highest codes of honour and integrity had binding force in the intercourse of military men only.

Singing and dancing were as much loved by the soldier in the provinces as they had ever been by the courtier in the capital. But there came into vogue now a new application of the former art; a kind of musical recitative, which never thereafter ceased to be popular. A Buddhist priest of the Tendai sect—Shinano Zenji Yuki-naga—composed a prose epic based on the for-

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tunes of the great Taira family, and taught it to one Shobutsu, a Biwa bonze (*Biwa-bozu*, priest from Biwa), as blind players of the four-stringed Chinese lute were called; not that they were really bonzes, but merely because they shaved their heads after the manner of Buddhist priests. Yukinaga naturally instructed the lutist to adopt the manner of intonation practised by the priests of the Tendai sect in reading the *Sutras* or repeating litanies, and there resulted a recitative to which the name *Heike-bushi* (tune of the House of Hei) was given. The soldier class took keen pleasure in listening to this entertainment, and gradually the repertoire of the blind lute-player was extended so as to include stirring episodes of military history in every age. The *Biwa-bozu* exhibited great skill alike in the modulation of his voice, the excellence of his elocution, and the reality of his simulated passion. He could hold an audience in rapt attention and move it to tears as well as to laughter.

Closely resembling the performance of the *Biwa-bozu* so far as method was concerned, but differing from it in the nature of the subject of the recitative as well as in the instrument employed, was the *Jōruri*. This is said to have been originated by Ono no O-tsū, a lady in the household of either Oda Nobunaga or the *Taikō*, who recited the story of Yoshitsune's light of love, *Jōruri*, accompanying herself with the *samisen*. Thus while the lutist took his subject from



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warlike annals, the *Jōruri* performer chose events from every-day life, singing some parts and reciting others, the recitation being, of course, without music. The *Jōruri* won the nation's heart at once, and soon had numerous professors, both male and female, of whom the most celebrated devised new styles and gave distinguishing names to them. The *Biwa-bozu* always recited from memory, and the stirring passages of the subject were delivered in a manner bearing much resemblance to the "patter" songs of modern Europe and America, the lute's rapid shower of notes being poured out so as to punctuate the passage of the recitative rather than to accompany them. This was pre-eminently the martial music of Japan, and continues to be so, partly because deeds of bravery and devotion have always been the theme of the song, partly because a strain of rattle and dash infuses the whole performance. The *Jōruri* appeals rather to plaintive and pitiful moods. Many of its passages are tearful, and the singer is expected to simulate emotions not permitted to the *Biwa-bozu*. A score containing a species of musical notation as well as the words of the *Jōruri* is placed before the performer on a lectern, and the *samisen* is tuned in a low minor key. It may be noted that both the *Biwa-bozu* and the *Jōruri* performer often sing from the chest, instead of limiting themselves to the head-voice usually characteristic of Japanese singing. The lutist is frequently blind,

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but a blind *Jōruri* performer would be out of character.

An important fact connected with the Military epoch is that it saw the beginnings of the histrionic art in Japan. There is some obscurity about this point, but the most accurate researches go to show that the embryo of the Japanese drama is to be found in the *Den-gaku*, or "bucolic mime," reference to which has already been made. The *Den-gaku* suggested spectacular effects, and the dramatic idea was derived from the various kinds of song and dance described above, — the spirited epics of the *Biwa-bozu*; the tragic recitative of the *Jōruri* performer; the *genre* sonnets (*ima-yō*) and semi-poetical chaunts (*mono-gatari*) of the "white measure-markers;" and the Buddhist "life-lengthening dance" (*yennen-mai*), in which a fan-bearing acolyte postured while friars beat hand-drums.

It seems impossible to trace the exact processes by which a true drama was evolved from these elements, but there is little room to doubt that Buddhist priests first conceived the project of combining the spectacular effects of the *Den-gaku* with the emotional appeals of the various musical and recitative performances in vogue from the thirteenth century downward. Unfortunately there does not survive even one clearly identified example of a *Den-gaku* performance thus modified. The *Den-gaku*, as tradition describes it and as the national memory recalls it, was simply a

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display of acrobatic feats. Popular patois, more retentive than history, applies the name *Den-gaku* to a rectangular slice of bean-curd having a skewer thrust through it from end to end, because a cake thus transfixed is supposed to resemble a *Den-gaku* gymnast mounted on a single stilt. By the Hōjō rulers in Kamakura, however, the *Den-gaku*, even before it had emerged from its acrobatic stage, was generously patronised. The *Taiheiki*, a celebrated work, part history, part romance, compiled in the fourteenth century, contains a unique but brief account of the *Den-gaku* as performed at Kamakura before the Buddhist priests had interfered to change it from a musical and spectacular display of gymnastic exercises to an artistic and dramatic representation:—

The pure tones of the music ringing in the ears of the audience, the drums beating blithely and the flute sounding the cadence, there emerge from the eastern orchestra-room eight beautifully apparelled youths, wearing tunics of gold brocade. Simultaneously eight tonsured youths, robed in pure white tunics decorated with designs of flowers and birds lightly traced in gold, and wearing voluminous ankle-gathered trousers with a variegated pattern in silver, flash into sight from the Western room, beating out the measure and swaying their broad hats in unison. Then, led respectively by Ako of the *Honza* and Hikoyasha of the *Shinza*, they play with daggers and balls, showing such divine skill that eyes and ears alike of the audience are astounded. This display ended, a boy of eight or nine, wearing a



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monkey mask and holding a sacred wand (*gohei*) on high, crosses the steeply arched bridge diagonally from the orchestra-room of the *Shinza*, and springing upon the high railing, spins round to the right, spins round to the left, leaps down and leaps up again, with such grace and agility as to seem more than mortal.

This is merely a refined exhibition of dancing and acrobatics, distinguished, however, from any previous performances by the fact that a regular stage was provided. Exactly how the Buddhist priests proceeded to introduce the innovations attributed to them, history and tradition alike are silent. But it was natural that after the union of *Shintō* and Buddhism, the representatives of the latter should pay some attention to dancing, for an essential part of *Shintō* worship had always been the *Kagura*, a dance derived, as already stated, from the mythical performance of the Celestial Deities before the cave of the Sun Goddess; and it was equally natural that while their shrewd eclecticism enabled the Buddhist monks to detect the dramatic and spectacular possibilities of the chaunts and recitative of the "white measure-marker," the *Biwa-bozu* and the *Jōruri* experts, their literary ability should have helped them to work up these materials into a histrionic form. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that, seeing the passionate fondness of the Japanese people for dance and song, the Buddhist monks conceived the idea of enlisting those agents in the cause of religious propagandism.

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The following is an example of the words they put into the mouth of the musician who accompanied the dance : —

Our days are a dream that fades in the darkness ;  
A hundred years hence who can hope to remain ?  
Empty and vain are all things around us ;  
Where to find permanence who can pretend ?  
Life is as foam that flaketh the water,  
Shred by the wild wind and scattered at will ;  
Man's soul like a caged bird the opening awaiteth  
To wing to the skies its foredestined flight  
That which is gone can ne'er be recalled,  
He that departs will come not again ;  
Followeth death after birth in a moment,  
Bloom in an instant by blight is replaced ;  
And for him that in fame and in fortune rejoices,  
Riseth already the smoke of the grave-pyre.  
What travail from hell's doom can purchase evasion ?  
Mammon or moil, can they save from the grave ?  
Gathereth who by what labour so ceaseless,  
Shall not his sins outnumber his gains ?  
Recall with closed eyes the days that have faded,  
All the old friendships, have they not gone ?  
Count with bent fingers the men that were once here,  
Dear ones and distant, hidden are all.  
Times change and things pass, who shall set limits ?  
One stays and one goes, nothing is safe.  
As flame-shrivelled tinder vanish the three worlds ;<sup>1</sup>  
Angel or anchorite, death's pangs for each.  
Whence then reprieve for common or low-born ?  
Light not their trespass, heavy their pains ;  
Sins they have sowed bear ripe crop of sorrow,  
The tale of their deeds is reckoned in full.  
Brayed in the mortar of hell without pity ;

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 3.



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Hewed into myriads of blood-streaming parts ;  
Dying ten thousand deaths daily, yet living ;  
Clutching sharp blades and treading on spears ;  
Shattered and crushed by the rock-piling torture ;  
Writhing in flames that fuse marrow and bone ;  
Choked by the breath of fierce-burning fires ;  
Clasped in the bergs of the frozen blood-sea ;  
Famished, and feeding on fragments of iron ;  
Slaking parched thirst with drafts of lead molten —  
Countless the tortures hell holds for the wicked.  
Shall they be spared that have wittingly sinned ?  
Shall not the demon that dwells in their bosom  
Give them shrewd earnest of sufferings to come ?  
And like frail clouds that float through the moonlight,  
In the after-world life they shall wander distraught.

In the absence of any rational connection between religious chaunts like the above and acrobatic performances of the nature of the *Den-gaku*, it seems reasonable to assume that the relation between the two did not extend beyond the borrowing of the *Den-gaku* stage and accessories for the purposes of the Buddhist dance. At the same time, the credit of originating a stage does not belong to the *Den-gaku* performers. Stages for the *Kagura* dance had long existed at many of the principal *Shintō* shrines — three in the province of Ise for the Daijin-gu services ; three in Omi for the Hyoshi services ; one in Tamba, one in Kawachi and one in Settsu for the Sumiyoshi services, and four in Nara for the Kasuga services. The *Den-gaku* stage was only a modified form of

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that used for the *Kagura*, one of the modifications being the addition of a bridge with a steeply arched roadway on which the acrobats commenced their feats as they emerged from the orchestra-room. Danced upon this stage the Buddhist versions of the *Den-gaku* assumed a stateliness and a splendour not previously imagined. But they did not obtain more than temporary patronage at the Imperial Court. Perhaps the favour with which they were viewed by the military rulers in Kamakura tended to discredit them in Kyōtō, but concerning that conjecture alone is possible. At all events, the *Den-gaku* was put aside in the Imperial capital, and the *Saru-gaku* (monkey mime) was adopted in its place.

The traditional origin of this curiously named dance has already been described, and the various theories about the derivation of the name have been noted. Whatever be truth as to those points, it is certain that up to the time now under consideration, namely, the middle of the fourteenth century, the *Saru-gaku* was simply a comic dance, and that its character then underwent a complete change. The Buddhist monks took it up, just as they had taken up the *Den-gaku*, and not only converted it into an instrument for propagating religious truths, but also employed it as a means of obtaining funds for charitable purposes. It is to be observed that at this time the Buddhist priesthood had virtually

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a monopoly of literary ability, and that such of the Kyōtō aristocrats as might have disputed that title were not less profoundly imbued with Buddhist doctrine than the friars themselves. Thus the task of compiling new odes or recitative for dances devolved of necessity on the priests, who, to use the words of an eminent Japanese author, "saw in the blossoms of summer and the red leaves of autumn only types of heaven's beauties; heard in the sigh of the wind and the splash of the water only echoes of Shaka's voice; recognised in a mother's love for her child only a reflection of Kwannon's infinite mercy, and regarded the death of a warrior on the battlefield as only a link in the great chain of destiny." The inevitable tendency of such authors was strengthened by the circumstances amid which they lived, the endless fightings, bloodshed, and commotions. They thought that a grave and softening tone should be imparted even to the frivolities of life, and they did thoroughly for the *Saru-gaku* what they had already done tentatively for the *Den-gaku*, — transformed it into a religious performance, inculcating the instability of life and the vanity of all things human. The change in each case was radical, — from the spectacular acrobatics of the original *Den-gaku* to the religious recitative of the later Kamakura performance; and from the broad jests and suggestive antics of the "monkey mime" to the stately measure, solemn

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demeanour, and moral teaching of the new drama.

For the *Saru-gaku* thus modified became, in effect, a drama. Its performers ceased to be mere dancers and were converted into actors. Even the name *Saru-gaku* passed out of use, being replaced by *Nô*<sup>1</sup> (accomplishment), which term continues in vogue until to-day. The stage for the performance of the new drama was in the open air, a platform eighteen feet square, having on either side a species of gallery for the audience, and in front a more elevated seat for any high official or court dignitary that might attend. Behind the platform and connected with it by an open passage or bridge, stood the "green room," and when a performer emerged from the green room, he passed first through an antechamber where a large round mirror stood, and then made his *début* upon the bridge, commencing his rôle from that moment just as the acrobats of the *Den-gaku* did. A stage-manager had his place in the dressing-room, and at the back of the stage were seated a row of musicians, numbering from ten to twenty, who acted the part of a chorus, accompanying the dance with flute and drum, and from time to time intoning the words of the drama. The costumes were magnificent; the music was weird and slow; masks modelled with admirable skill were worn, and the spectacular effects often

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 4.



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reached a high level of art. It is, indeed, more than doubtful whether any other people ever developed such an expressive vocabulary of motion, such impressive eloquence of gesture. These masked dancers of the *Nô*, deprived of the important assistance of facial expression, and limited to a narrow range of cadence, nevertheless succeeded in investing their performance with a character of noble dignity and profound intensity of sentiment. Very soon the *Nô* obtained extraordinary vogue. With the sole exception of the Emperor himself, every great personage took part in the performance; a stage was erected within the precincts of the Palace; costumes of the costliest and most beautiful materials were provided, and a collection of such garments as well as of masks and other accessories for the *Nô*, was counted an essential part of every aristocratic mansion's furniture. By degrees the practice of the art became a profession, but princes, nobles, and high officials did not cease to study it assiduously, and were prepared at any moment to organise performances or to take part in them. It need scarcely be said that various schools came into existence. At first, although Buddhist priests had taken such a large share in developing the *Nô*, *Shintô* shrines continued to be the principal scenes of its performance, the dance being then a ceremony of worship. But from the days of the Ashikaga *Shōgun* Yoshimitsu (1368-1394) it



underwent popularisation, and without losing its moral character, received an extension of motive, becoming an adjunct of congratulatory or commemorative occasions and even a pure diversion. With this change is associated a skilled performer (Yusaki) upon whom Yoshimitsu conferred the name Kwanami. This man, as well as his son Seami,<sup>1</sup> compiled several dramas based upon historical incidents of the Kamakura epoch, though the two writers carefully refrained from seeking materials in the events of their own time. Buddhist priests also continued to contribute to the literature of the art, and before the end of the fifteenth century some twenty dramas were regarded as the classics of the *Nô*. That prince of dilettante, Yoshimasa, who has already been seen extending lavish patronage to the tea cult, the incense cult, the landscape-garden cult and art in every form, gave a new impetus to the *Nô* by officially declaring it a ceremonious accomplishment of military men. He organised the renowned dancers into four orders, and enacted that a representative of each must repair to Kyōtō and give a performance there once during his career. Naturally that performance became the culmination of each great expert's triumph, and the "once-in-a-life *Nô*" were conducted on a conspicuously magnificent scale. The *Taikō* loved the *Nô*. Several of the best dramas were written

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 5.

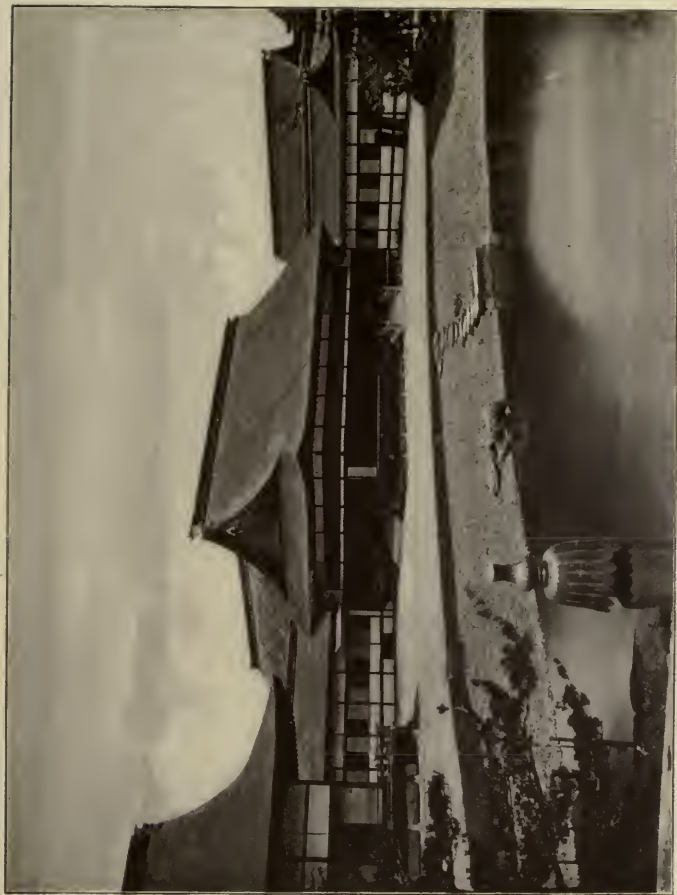
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at his suggestion, a new school was started by one of his *protégés*, and despite his personal disadvantages he took a place enthusiastically on the platform. When he attained the post of Regent, the highest office within reach of a subject, he repaired to the Court and himself performed a *Nô* dance in the presence of the Emperor.

The *Nô* as here described was solemn and stately, the postures and paces as well as the drama itself being purged of every comic element, and thus completely differentiated from the mimes out of which it had grown. But art demanded that the sombreness of such representations should be relieved by some lighter scenes, and to satisfy that requirement farces were compiled for independent acting between the *Nô*. These farces (*Kyôgen*) were essentially of a histrionic character, the dance being omitted altogether, or entirely subordinated to the action of the piece and the dialogue. Many of them showed not only humour but wit, and the skill of the actors was excellent. The chief and the first-assistant performers in the *Nô* and the *Kyôgen* alike received the title of *taiyu*, which conferred upon them the right to have the curtain of the green-room held up by two men for their exits or entries, and also rendered them eligible for admission to any society. The *Kyôgen* may be regarded as a revival of the *Saru-gaku* from which the *Nô* was originally evolved. History is silent as to the author or circumstances of the revival,

but since several *Kyôgen* composed in the Ashikaga era are still extant, it may fairly be concluded that the laughter-loving element of Japanese character did not long consent to the abolition of the comic *Saru-gaku*.

The similarity between the *Nô* performances and the ancient Greek drama has often attracted attention. The chorus, the masked actors, the religious tone pervading the piece, the stage in the open air, — all these features were common to the two dramas. But a closer analogy can be found without going so far afield. The embryo of the Indian drama was a combination of song and dance at sacred festivals, just as the *Kagura* was the foundation of the Japanese *Nô*, and the development of the art in India was by narrative recitation and subsequently by dialogue, first sung, then spoken, just as the stages of progress in Japan were the recitative of the “tonsured lutist” and the “white measure-marker,” followed by the sung and spoken dialogue of the *Nô*. A further point of resemblance is seen in the fact that, while the Japanese *Kagura* was founded on a mythical dance performed by the divinities before the cave of the Sun Goddess, so the Indian *nâtya* is supposed to have been a dance accompanied by gesticulation and speech, which was performed by the spirits and nymphs of Indra’s heaven before the gods. Again, in the Indian drama the connection of the narrative was often preserved by interpreters, whose function closely resembled that



INTERIOR OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE, KYOTO.





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of the chorus in the Japanese *Nô*, and both alike being performed in the open courts of palaces or temples, artificial scenery was of necessity absent, and unity of place became, therefore, an impossibility, nor was it considered strange that a character should make journeys on the stage under the eyes of the audience. Further, from both dramas exhibitions of what may be called the vulgar acts of life were banished: actors did not die in public, or eat, or sleep, or make love. Displays of that kind were relegated to the region of the theatre proper in Japan, and were not sanctioned at all on the Indian stage. It may, perhaps, be a little forced to draw an analogy between the dramatic languages of the two countries, yet note may at least be taken of the fact that the classical phraseology invariably adopted by the Indian dramatists was as far beyond the understanding of the majority of a Hindu audience as the language of the *Nô* was beyond the comprehension of ordinary Japanese spectators. Of course there were many differences, especially in the matter of construction. For whereas the Indian drama opened with a kind of prologue and closed with a prayer or benediction, and was of necessity divided into a minimum number of acts, the Japanese *Nô* had neither prologue nor apologue, and its division, in the rare cases when division was resorted to, obeyed no rule but the convenience of the action. Within the space of even a one-act *Nô*, the unity of time was often con-

spicuously neglected, but it need scarcely be said that the unities of time and place have lost, in modern days, the importance they once possessed in the eyes of dramatic critics.

Considering the close relations that existed between the civilisations and literatures of Japan and China, the student naturally expects to find an easily traced connection between the histrionic arts of the two countries. But comparison reveals differences rather than affinities. When it has been said that both arose from the union of dance and song, their points of resemblance have been virtually exhausted. The singing actor, the principal figure of the Chinese drama, found no counterpart in Japan; the religious element in the former country's art is often mere buffoonery, whereas in the latter's it is always reverent; there was no chorus in China nor any open-air stage, and the Chinese never made between tragedy and comedy the sharp distinction which the Japanese drew. Perhaps these comparisons possess little value. It may be urged, for example, that whatever similarities seem to exist between the dramatic art of India and that of Japan, they are at once conclusively differentiated by the fact that, whereas the latter dealt mainly with the tragic aspects of life and appealed principally to the sentiments of pathos and pity, all fatal or tearful conclusions were prohibited in the former. Nevertheless the analogies certainly possess passing interest.

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Some of the most celebrated of these semi-metrical dramas, the *Nō*, have been skilfully translated into English of purity and grace. But the learned sinologues, their translators, by substituting the smoothly moving, majestic Iambic metre for the short, crisp pulsations of the Japanese line, and by obeying exigencies of rhyme whereas the original demands rhythm only, have obtained elegance at the partial expense of fidelity. An example less elaborated is given here:

### THE ATAKA *NŌ*

WRITTEN BY KWANZE NOBUMITSU

*circ.* 1485

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. — One of the saddest episodes of Japanese history is the fate of the brilliant and chivalrous general, Yoshitsune. Yoritomo, the Minamoto Chieftain, when (1185) he raised the white flag of his clan against the rival house of Taira, and succeeded in overwhelming his enemies and establishing a military government in Kamakura, owed his successes in the field mainly to the military genius of his younger brother, Yoshitsune. But Yoritomo's jealous temperament becoming inflamed against his brother, he readily listened to slanderous charges against Yoshitsune's loyalty, and having failed to compass the latter's death secretly, issued orders for his arrest. Yoshitsune, beloved by all that had served under him, favoured by the Imperial Court in Kyōtō, and capable of raising an army which his strategic genius must have rendered formidable if not invincible, would have obeyed the precedents of his era had he drawn the sword against his brother. But his noble nature forbade such a course. Taking with him only eleven men, who had followed his fortunes with unswerving fidelity and were without exception soldiers of proved prowess, he disguised him-



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self as a pilgrim friar and escaped northward to Hidehira, chieftain of Ōshu, his uncle, who had sheltered him in his early days. There he ultimately died by his own hand, when the last of his comrades had fallen under the swords of Yoritomo's emissaries. The drama here translated is based on a celebrated episode of the flight to Ōshu. Yoritomo established barrier-guards on all the roads leading northward, giving them orders to forbid the passage of any pilgrim band that answered to the description of the fugitives, and, if possible, to apprehend them. One of these guard-houses, at Ataka, is the scene of the drama. The giant halberdier, Benkei, almost as celebrated in Japanese history as Yoshitsune himself, devises a plan to pass the barrier. He disguises Yoshitsune as the baggage-bearer of the party, and, at a critical moment, disarms suspicion by beating him as though he were a common coolie. To the barrier-guards it seems incredible that the brilliant young nobleman, with whose exploits the whole empire is ringing, should be submitted to such a terrible indignity, and they allow the pilgrims to pass. The profound pathos of the notion that Benkei, who had again and again risked his life in Yoshitsune's cause, should have been obliged to raise his hand against the man he loved, and the shockingly sacrilegious nature of such conduct on the part of a vassal towards his lord, appeal with intense force to the mind of every Japanese; force not to be estimated unless it is remembered that to have thrown himself upon the barrier-guards and fallen fighting, would have been an incomparably less painful and more orthodox alternative to the loyal halberdier than the course he adopted. It was necessary, however, to furnish to the captain of the guard some pretext for granting passage to the party, and Benkei chose a method for which he afterwards offered to apologise by suicide. A particularly dramatic incident of the scene at the barrier is Benkei's pretence of reading from a sacred record, which, had the party been veritable pilgrim-priests, they must have possessed. The captain of the barrier calls for the record, and the big soldier, producing an itinerary scroll, reads some extemporised passages from it in a thunderous voice, his coolness and presence of mind carrying him through an ordeal where the smallest hesitation or confusion would have involved death.



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SCENE. — *The barrier guard-house at Ataka.*

TOGASHI (*Iyenawo, whose title is Togashi-no-suke*). I am Togashi. Yoritomo and Yoshitsune, having become foes, and Yoritomo having learned that Lord Hangwan (*Yoshitsune, commonly called Hangwan*) and his eleven followers, adopting the guise of pilgrim-priests, are making their way to Mutsu, has caused barriers to be set up in all the provinces, and has ordered that all pilgrim-priests shall be rigorously examined. I am thus charged with the duty of arresting the passage of pilgrims at this place, and I have to give strict injunctions in that sense. Ho there!

MAN-AT-ARMS. At your service, Sir.

TOGASHI. If any pilgrim-priests seek to pass to-day, report to me.

MAN-AT-ARMS. It shall be done, Sir.

(*Enter a party of pilgrim-priests.*)

*Chorus.* From traveller's vestment  
Pendent bells ring notes  
Of pilgrim's foot-falls;  
And from road-stained sleeves  
Pendent dew-drops presage  
Tears of last meetings.

*Chorus.* Hankai<sup>1</sup> with tattered shield  
Of stole and surplice,  
From Miyako wends  
His many-mornèd way,  
To northern limits.  
Oh weary distance!  
Even thought grows tired.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 6.

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BENKEI. His lordship's followers !

PILGRIMS. Ise no Samuro, Suruga no Jiro, Kataoka,  
Masuwo, Hitachibô.

BENKEI. Benkei, the pilgrim pioneer.<sup>1</sup>

PILGRIMS. We twelve our lord leads,  
Robed in unwonted  
Vestment of travel ;  
Pilgrim-bells dangling.  
Facing the far north,  
Through dew and hoar-frost  
Fare we, if haply  
There, mid the white snows,  
Some ray of spring's sun  
We may find shining.

*Chorus.* The second month's midnights  
Are counted by ten when  
They wend from Myako.  
Coming or going,  
Each alike parting,  
Witting or ignorant,  
Equally reaching<sup>2</sup>  
The hills of Osaka,  
Shrouded in spring's haze,  
Fairest at farewell.

To Kaizu-no-ura  
Their wave-way the boats wend.  
Softly the dawning day  
Glints on the newly greened  
Reeds of Arachi.  
Now Kehi's sacred pines,  
Ringing the red fane  
On Konome's summit,  
Rise from the lake's breast.  
And yet more distant,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, note 8.

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Mount Itatori  
Trodden by woodmen.<sup>1</sup>  
Shallow-streamed Asasuzu ;<sup>2</sup>  
Mikuni's haven ;  
And Shinowara, where  
Lapping the reeds' feet,  
Salt wavelets ripple.  
Till at Ataka  
Spring's early blossoms  
Lower meek heads to  
Their foe, the wind's onset.<sup>3</sup>

YOSHITSUNE.<sup>4</sup> Benkei !

BENKEI. At your service, my lord.

YOSHITSUNE. Did you hear what those travellers said just now ?

BENKEI. No, my lord, I did not hear anything.

YOSHITSUNE. They said that a new barrier-guard has been set at Ataka, and that pilgrims attempting to pass are subjected to rigorous examination.

BENKEI. What incredible ill-fortune ! They must have set a guard because they heard of your lordship's journey. This is of the gravest import. Let us take counsel here.

THE OTHER PILGRIMS. It does not seem to us that the case is so serious. We have only to cut a way for our lord's passage.

BENKEI. A moment ! It is true, as you say, that we might easily force this one barrier. But we have to consider our lord's subsequent movements. Every effort must be made, in my opinion, to avoid disturbance.

YOSHITSUNE. I trust the matter to your management, Benkei.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, note 10.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, note 11.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, note 12.

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BENKEI. I accept the trust, my lord. An idea occurs to me. We others have all the semblance of poor pilgrims, but unless you are further disguised, we cannot hope to escape notice. With your pardon I would suggest that you doff your pilgrim's robe, take that baggage-bearer's pack on your back, pull your hat far over your face, and follow us at a little distance, simulating extreme weariness. You will scarcely be recognised if you take these precautions.

YOSHITSUNE. It is wisely said. Remove this robe then.

BENKEI. At your service, my lord. Here, baggage-bearer!

BAGGAGE-BEARER. At your service, Sir.

BENKEI. Bring your pack here.

BAGGAGE-BEARER. It is here, Sir.

BENKEI. A sacrilege, in truth, that your pack should be placed on my lord's shoulders. Now go forward, and see how things fare at the barrier. Bring a true report whether they are really subjecting pilgrims to close scrutiny.

BAGGAGE-BEARER. I obey.

BENKEI. My lord, we may now go forward. Aye! It is well said that the purple flower, wherever it be planted, cannot be hidden.

*Chorus.* Surely his robe changed  
For coarsest of raiment,  
His lordly gait altered  
To lowly churl's slouching,  
No heed will be paid to  
This humble-miened toiler.

BENKEI. Aye, and the baggage-pack —  
YOSHITSUNE. Yoshitsune has shouldered.

*Chorus.* Shelter to give to  
The borne not the bearer,  
A common churl's rain-cape!



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YOSHITSUNE. His face he conceals with  
A hat of wreathed rushes ;

*Chorus.* Leans on an iron staff ;

YOSHITSUNE. Wears drudge's pattens ;

*Chorus.* And with a halting gait  
Tramps slowly onward,  
A spectacle pitiful.

BENKEI. Follow in our rear, my lord. Now, are all ready ?

PILGRIMS. We are ready.

MAN-AT-ARMS (*at the barrier*). Sir, a number of pilgrims seek passage.

TOGASHI. What say you ? Pilgrims seeking passage ? Aye, so it is. Pilgrims, this is a barrier.

BENKEI. Sir, we are pilgrims who have been sent to travel through the country seeking aid for the re-building of Tôdaiji<sup>1</sup> in Nara. We are instructed to visit the northern circuit, and have thus reached this place. We pray your contribution.

TOGASHI. You do well. I will contribute. But this barrier all save pilgrims may pass.

BENKEI. Sir, the reason ?

TOGASHI. The reason ! Yoritomo and Yoshitsune have become enemies, and it has been reported to my lord Yoritomo that Lord Hangwan (Yoshitsune), with eleven followers disguised as pilgrims, is on his way northward to seek the assistance of Hidehira of Mutsu. Orders have therefore been issued that barriers shall be set up in all the provinces and pilgrim-friars rigorously scrutinised. This barrier is in my charge : pilgrims cannot pass. Above all, a band so numerous as yours. Not one of you can have passage.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 13.

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BENKEI. I have heard, Sir. But your instructions are to stop pretended pilgrims. You surely do not mean that you will stop genuine pilgrims?

MAN-AT-ARMS. In sooth! Seeing that already three pilgrims were put to the sword here yesterday.

BENKEI. Say you so! And were those slaughtered pilgrims Yoshitsune and his followers?

TOGASHI. Poh! arguments! I will have no controversy. Not one shall pass. I have said it.

BENKEI. It is then your purpose to slay us also here?

TOGASHI. Undoubtedly.

BENKEI. Incredible! We have come indeed to an ill-fated place! There is no help. We must then perform our last rites and submit quietly to our fate. Approach all and prepare. I begin our last rite.

BENKEI. Servant of the great anchorite Yen is the friar-pilgrim.

PILGRIMS. Fashioned after the sacred shape of the divine Fudo.

BENKEI. His coif is the crown of the five talents.

PILGRIMS. Its plaits are the twelve lusts of the flesh.

BENKEI. His bells the nine rites that make perfection.

PILGRIMS. His hose the emblem of dark chaos.

BENKEI. His eight-looped sandals.

PILGRIMS. The eight-petalled lotus-flower under his feet.

BENKEI. Each breath he breathes forms the quintessential sounds.<sup>1</sup>

PILGRIMS. The body of the Buddha, the pilgrim-friar's!

BENKEI. Here to be struck down and laid low.

PILGRIMS. How shall the divine Fudo be appeased?

BENKEI. Kumano Gongen will mete out punishment,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 14.

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PILGRIMS. Here without interval.

BENKEI. Be it not doubted. (*All together rapidly rubbing their rosaries. Om mani padme hum!*)

TOGASHI. It is well done! I gather then that you exhort men to contribute to the re-building of Tôdaiji in Nara. Presumably you carry with you the prospectus of the temple. I desire to hear it read.

BENKEI. Is it your wish to hear the prospectus read?

TOGASHI. Assuredly.

BENKEI. I obey. Naturally we have the prospectus. (*He takes from the valise a scroll in which correspondence is inscribed, and pretending it to be the prospectus, reads in a stentorian voice:*) "After the autumnal moon of the Great Teacher (Shaka) set in the clouds of Nirvana, there remained no man capable of rousing the living and the dead from the long dream in which they were sunk. Then, in mid antiquity, the Mikado, whose name was reverentially called the Emperor Shomu, being separated from his best beloved and powerless to subdue his yearnings, the round tears, welling, fell like strings of pearls from his eyes, and turning into the three paths, he erected a statue of Birushana. Now Shunjôbô Chôgen, grieving that the image should not have a fane, travelled throughout the land seeking alms, and promising that if any gave even a single sheet of paper or so much as half a coin, he should enjoy limitless happiness here, and sit hereafter upon the thousand petalled lotus." (*As BENKEI concludes his reading in a voice that rises reverberating to the sky, the guards at the barrier all bow their heads in awe.*)

TOGASHI. Pass speedily.

BENKEI. We obey. (*They pass the barrier.*)

MAN-AT-ARMS. Sir, Sir, Lord Hangwan is passing.

TOGASHI. How? Halt there, baggage-bearer!

PILGRIMS. How now! They suspect our lord. The crisis! The crisis! (*They all turn back.*)

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BENKEI. Hold! Hold! Let not haste misdirect you. Why is our baggage-bearer seized?

TOGASHI. I propose to detain him.

BENKEI. For what reason?

TOGASHI. He is said to resemble a certain man. Stop him there!

BENKEI. A man resemble a man! What then? That is not strange. Whom does he resemble?

TOGASHI. He is said to resemble Yoshitsune. I shall detain him for examination.

BENKEI. Incredible! Wretched coolie with your likeness to Yoshitsune! A life-time's not long enough to be angry with you. We have to reach Noto before sunset, and you with your light load lag behind exciting people's suspicions! You rascal! I'll teach you a lesson. (*Raises his pilgrim's iron staff and beats YOSHITSUNE unmercifully.*) No one would trouble himself whether such a fellow passed or did not pass had you not sneaked along like a thief.

*Chorus.* Why lay thy hand to sword and sabre for the sake of a common baggage-bearer? Whence this perturbation? Is it terror? As the eleven pilgrims, their trenchant blades half-drawn, stride forward like one man, their aspect might affright even a demon!

TOGASHI. It was a mistake. Pass then; pass. (*YOSHITSUNE passes rapidly.*)

BENKEI. Now that we have left that barrier behind, let us halt here a moment. Draw near all of you. What am I to say? In this extremity I have been guilty of a monstrous act. When my lord's fortune is at this low ebb that Benkei should have struck him — the thought overwhelms me with shame!

YOSHITSUNE. You imagine that I resent it, Benkei! I tell you it was an inspiration. It was not the act of an ordinary mortal. I am persuaded that Heaven is



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protecting me. When I fell under the suspicion of the guards, when my last day was in sight, that you paused not a moment to ask questions, but beat me soundly as though I were a veritable servant — that, that was not of Benkei's devising: it was Hachiman's.<sup>1</sup>

*Chorus.* Thinking it an inspiration, he is filled with gratitude!

*Chorus.* Though the ages drew to their close, though sun and moon should fall from the sky, what excuse could be found for him that raised his hand against his lord? How should he escape the punishment of Heaven?<sup>2</sup>

*Chorus.* Known now the suffering  
Fate, in past months and years,  
Stored for this sad spring.  
Still in their hour of pain  
Marvel they most that chance  
Led them in safety through  
Danger so desperate.  
Thus the twelve fugitives,  
Waking as from a dream,  
See in each other's eyes  
Tears of glad gratitude.

*Chorus.* Born a child of bow and steed,  
His life Yoshitsune willing gave  
To Yoritomo. 'Neath the crests  
Of Western ocean glad to sink  
His loyal corpse. On storm-swept moor  
Or mountain, or by far sea-shore,  
Mailed arm for pillow, night by night,  
A warrior keeping watch. Anon  
To will of wind and wave resigned;  
Anon in snow-storm on the height  
Where fast flakes hide the bridle hand;

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 15.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, note 16.

# J A P A N

Or o'er Akashi's dunes where rings  
 The boom of evening billow — there  
 In three brief years a mighty foe  
 Broken and crushed. Of these leal deeds  
 What guerdon now? Oh! Fate, what sins  
 Of previous life are punished thus!  
 The tide of fortune at its height  
 Bears fullest freight of broken hopes.  
 Such is the world's sad lesson! But  
 To know makes not to be resigned.  
 The soldier's spirit, straight and fair,  
 As stringless bow of Azusa,  
 Spurns the foul thought that calumny  
 Its crooked way should win unchecked;<sup>1</sup>  
 As mists born in the far-off south  
 Make snow clouds in the northern sky,  
 And in the drifts brave men are choked.  
 Are there no gods to whom we pray?  
 Oh! World of misery and spite!  
 Oh! World of misery and spite!

*(The scene here returns to the barrier guard-house.)*

TOGASHI. Ho, there!

MAN-AT-ARMS. At your service, Sir.

TOGASHI. The rough usage those pilgrim-friars  
 received at our hands irks me. I would follow them  
 and exchange a cup of regret. Go you ahead, and bid  
 them wait.

MAN-AT-ARMS. I obey, Sir. *(To the pilgrims whom  
 he has followed.)* Ho, Sirs! I am ordered to express  
 regret for the rude treatment you received at the  
 barrier, and to say that the Captain of the Guard  
 is coming to offer you a cup of *sake*.

BENKEI. Are we then to meet his honour again?

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 17.

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MAN-AT-ARMS. 'T is so, Sir.

BENKEI. Truly, truly! (*aside*.) I understand. This cup of kindness is to wash away our caution! Let it but increase our vigilance!

*Chorus.* Show no surprise! By Benkei warned,  
Under the shadow of the hill  
In watchful round each pilgrim sits,  
To drink the cup of compliment.

BENKEI. Joy! In the mountain stream.<sup>1</sup>

*Chorus.* Joy! In the mountain stream  
Floating the wine-cup.  
Caught by the current, it  
Spins down the eddies.  
Waving sleeves, come, come!  
Tread we a measure.  
Erstwhile at Hiyeizan  
Benkei an acolyte,<sup>2</sup>  
Skilled in the sacred dance.  
"Song of the water-fall,  
Echoed from rock to rock,  
Sweeter no melody."<sup>3</sup>

BENKEI. I have well drunk. Let me fill your cup.

TOGASHI. Then I will pledge you. Pray you,  
dance a measure.

BENKEI. At your service.

*Chorus.* "Song of the water-fall" —

BENKEI (*singing and dancing*). "Song of the water-fall" —

*Chorus.* "Song of the water-fall;  
Plash plash and babble!  
Gurgle and drip drop!"

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 18.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, note 19.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, note 20.

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Slip not the bow-string  
Lose not your caution !

*(The barrier guards take their leave ; the baggage-bearer  
hoists his burden on his shoulders.)*

As men who have stepped on  
The tail of a tiger,  
As men who have fingered  
The fangs of a viper,  
They pass on their journey  
To Mutsu, land of snows.

The tone of pessimism that pervades this drama is characteristic of all the *Nô* composed during the Military epoch, and has been interpreted as proving their priestly authorship. Some learned critics go so far as to assert that the laymen generally credited with having written the *Nô* were really responsible, not for the text, but only for the music, the dances, and the staging, the text being furnished by Buddhist priests, who employed it as a vehicle for inculcating the instability of life, metempsychosis, the circle of fate, the chain of existences, and other religious doctrines. Certainly the dramas offer internal evidence of the truth of that theory.



## Chapter II

### REFINEMENTS AND PASTIMES OF THE MILITARY EPOCH (*Continued*).

THE *Kyôgen*, or farces, with which the solemnity of the *Nô* was relieved, are often very comical, but their humour does not always appeal to foreign readers. A great many were composed during the Military epoch, and it is notable that, like the *Nô* proper, not one of them contains anything opposed to the canons of propriety. The same cannot be said of early Japanese prose literature, for though the diction is graceful and the style refined, subjects are sometimes introduced that are distinctly indelicate. It must not be supposed, however, that early and mediæval Japanese literature was worse in this respect than contemporary European writings. On the whole, it was better. Still freedom from the taint of immorality cannot be claimed for it ; whereas in the realms of farce and of the drama a very strict rule seems to have been prescribed and observed. The experience of other nations would lead us to expect that in this branch of literature above all others realism would sometimes degenerate into immodesty and

humour into obscenity. But such is not the case in Japanese dramas or farces. The former deal solely with the higher sentiments, seeking their subjects among instances of signal bravery, heroic devotion, loyal piety, and pitiful misfortunes; the latter take their material from the every-day life of the people, but avoid all its erotic and indecorous aspects. This remark applies only to *Nô* and *Nô-Kyôgen*, not to the farces and comedies represented on the boards of the theatre in later times. Concerning these latter no such favourable verdict can be passed. But the vulgar theatre and the aristocratic *Nô* and *Nô-Kyôgen* remained always distinct. The theatre, indeed, in the ordinary sense of the term, had not come into existence in the age now under consideration: it was a creation of subsequent eras, as will presently be shown. Common folks in the Military epoch had no opportunity of witnessing a histrionic performance unless a drama of the *Nô* type was put upon one of the religious stages for purposes of charity, and even then a certain measure of selection was applied to the audience. The drama (*Nô*) and its associated farce (*Kyôgen*) were essentially a pastime of the upper classes, and to that reason, perhaps, is to be chiefly attributed their authors' obedience to the rules of pudicity. The plots were never complicated. A skinflint leaves his servants in charge of a jar of sugar, telling them that it is poison. They eat it in his absence, and then

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prepare an excuse by destroying some of his choicest possessions, in order to be able to tell him, on his return, that remorse for their carelessness induced them to attempt suicide by poison. Three men set out on a pilgrimage, agreeing that under no circumstances will they quarrel during their travels. Two of them shave the head of the third during his sleep, and when he awakes and finds what has happened, he forgets his promise, loses his temper, and turns his face homeward. But *en route* he conceives a scheme of retribution; goes to the wives of his two friends; tells them that their husbands have been drowned in crossing a ford, and that he has shaved his head and become a monk in order to pray for the repose of their souls; induces the women also to shave their heads and become nuns; carries away the hair, and shows it to the two travellers as proof of the deaths of their wives, and thus persuades them also to shave their heads and abandon the world. From such simple materials were these farces constructed, and though the costumes were prepared with the greatest fidelity, and the acting reached a high standard, no attempt was made to adapt the scenery to the incident, nor was the audience expected to look for realistic effects outside the speech, mien, and actions of the performers. The following is a typical *Kyôgen*:—

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## THE THREE CRIPPLES

### A FARCE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

(*Enter* HOUSEHOLDER.)

HOUSEHOLDER. I am a person of this neighbourhood. For reasons of my own I am going to support some infirm folks. I'll put up a placard. (*Hasshi, hasshi; noise of nailing up placard.*) That's excellent. [*Exit.*]

(*Enter* BLINDMAN.)

BLINDMAN. I'm a gambler of this neighbourhood. I've had a terrible run of bad luck lately and lost all my money. Even my household furniture has gone. I don't see any way to get a living, but I hear that a placard has been put up promising that infirm folks shall be supported. I have n't any natural infirmity, but as people are wont to say that the scabbards have slipped off my eyes, my sight is so sharp, I'm going to make a radical change and be blind for a time. I've got myself up for the purpose. Now to hurry to the place. (*En route.*) Well! Well! It would have been better if I'd stopped when every one warned me; but I kept thinking, I'll get even this time, I'll win back this time, and so I've come to a pretty plight! Hulloo! Here's the place. Now to be a blindman. Within there! Within there! (*calling at the gate.*)

HOUSEHOLDER. Somebody outside. Who's there?

BLINDMAN. Beg pardon. I'm a blindman come on account of the placard posted up.

HOUSEHOLDER. What do you say? A blindman come on account of the placard? I'll support you, by all means. Come in.



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BLINDMAN. Thank you, Sir. With your permission. (*Goes inside, and the door is closed.*)

(*Enter CRIPPLE.*)

CRIPPLE. I'm a famous gentleman at large belonging to this neighbourhood. Keeping company with those "boys" and playing games with them, I've lost all my money and my house and property into the bargain. I don't see my way to get a living, but I hear that a rich fellow over there has put up a placard promising that infirm folks shall be supported. I have n't any natural infirmity, but as I'm particularly strong in the legs, I'm going to make a radical change and be a cripple for the time. Now to hurry to the place. (*En route.*) Well! Well! What an idiot I've been! I found it so amusing, so amusing; and now I've come to this! But repentance is of no use. Well, here I am! Now to be a regular cripple. Within there! Within there! (*calling at the gate.*)

HOUSEHOLDER. Somebody outside. Who's there?

CRIPPLE. It's I; a cripple come on account of the placard posted up.

HOUSEHOLDER. What's that? A cripple come on account of the placard? Why, you are quite young. How sad! I'll support you, by all means. Come in.

CRIPPLE. Thank you, Sir. With your permission. (*Goes in, and the door is closed.*)

(*Enter a MUTE.*)

MUTE. I'm a well-known gambler of this neighbourhood. Keeping company with idle fellows of late and playing games, I've had a terrible run of bad luck, and lost not only all my money but even my wife's clothes into the bargain. I don't see any way of supporting myself, but I hear that a rich fellow over there has put

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up a placard promising that infirm folks shall be supported. It's true I have n't any natural infirmity, but as people are in the habit of saying that my tongue is particularly sharp, I'm going to make a radical change and be a mute for a time. I've come provided with the implements. Now to hurry to the place. This is truly a case of the old saying, "Heaven does n't leave people to die." I've only to go over there and I shall get food. Hulloo! Here's the place. Now to be a mute. Mutes carry two bits of bamboo like these and strike them together thus — Wa-a-a! Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. Hulloo! There's a strange noise outside. What can it be! Who's there?

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. A mute, eh?

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. I'll support you. But have n't you any accomplishment?

MUTE (*striking the attitude of an archer*). Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. You can shoot with a bow, can you?

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. Any other accomplishment?

MUTE (*striking a spearman's attitude*). Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. You can use a spear, can you? Why, you're a very serviceable fellow. I'll give you plenty to eat.

MUTE. Oh, thank — (*Remembers that he is a mute, covers his mouth, and begins to move away.*)

HOUSEHOLDER. What's this? A mute speaking! However, the proverb says "The speech of a mute is an earnest of good fortune." I think I'll support him. Hi! Hi! I'll support you. Come in here.

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. Put yourself there.

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER (*soliloquising*). Come, come! I've

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quite a number of infirm people to support. I'd better allot to each of them his task, as I am going to be absent for a time. Hulloo, blindman!

BLINDMAN. What is it, Sir?

HOUSEHOLDER. I'm going away for three or four days, and I shall put you in charge of the storeroom where the Chinese furniture is. Look well after it in my absence.

BLINDMAN. Certainly, Sir. Pray do not be uneasy. I trust you will soon return.

HOUSEHOLDER. Good! Hulloo, hulloo, cripple! I'm going away for three or four days, and I shall put you in charge of the money room. Look well after it in my absence.

CRIPPLE. Certainly, Sir. I trust you will soon return.

HOUSEHOLDER. Good! Hulloo, hulloo there!

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. I'm going away for four or five days. Look after things well in my absence. I put you in charge of the cellar.

MUTE. Wa-a-a.

HOUSEHOLDER. Good-bye, all of you, then. I shall soon be back. [Exit.

BLINDMAN. Well, well! It's very inconvenient keeping one's eyes shut. I'll just open mine for a little.

CRIPPLE. Come, come! One's feet feel quite queer doubled up like this. I'll just stretch out mine a little.

*(The BLINDMAN and the CRIPPLE recognise each other.)*

BLINDMAN. Hulloo! It's you, is it? Well, well, well! I suppose the bad luck you've had lately sent you here?

CRIPPLE. Precisely. Just so. But there's a fellow there with a queer voice. Let's go and have a look at him.

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BLINDMAN. Come along. (*They see the MUTE.*)

BLINDMAN. What's this? Who's that fellow?  
Let's give him a start. (*Both together*) Hulloo!  
Hulloo!

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

BLINDMAN AND CRIPPLE (*both laughing*). Well!  
This is funny!

MUTE. Oh, it's you fellows, is it? No doubt the  
bad luck you've had lately sent you here?

CRIPPLE. Precisely. Just so.

MUTE. And what did you come as?

CRIPPLE. He came as a blindman and I as a cripple.  
And what are you?"

MUTE. Well, you see, as folks say that I've a particularly glib tongue, I went in for a change and became a mute.

BLINDMAN. Yes, indeed. You were a regular mute just now.

MUTE. Our host has gone away for four or five days.  
Did n't he put you in charge of anything?

CRIPPLE. Certainly we are in charge. The Blindman has the Chinese room, and I have the strong-room.

MUTE. Oh, ho! Those are very nice things!

BLINDMAN. And you, are you in charge of anything?

MUTE. I am looking after the cellar.

BLINDMAN AND CRIPPLE (*both*). That's better still.

MUTE. I'll tell you my idea. Let's first open the cellar that I am in charge of, and have a drink. Then we'll open the strong-room and play a few games; and then we'll open the Chinese room and clear out with its contents.

BLINDMAN AND CRIPPLE (*together*). That'll be first-rate.

MUTE. Come along then, come along. I'll open the cellar. Here we are. Here we are. Here's the door. (*Zara zara, sound of door opening.*) Dear me,



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what a lot of jars! Which shall we go for? I'll take the lid off this. It looks like capital *sake* (*rice-wine*). I'll pour out for you. Drink away! Drink away!

THE OTHER TWO. Pour out. Now then! Ha, ha! capital wine. Have a drink yourself, mute.

MUTE. Come, shall I give you a song?

THE OTHER TWO. Good, good!

THE THREE (*together*). *Zaranza, zaranza* (*sounds made to accompany a song*).

BLINDMAN. Then I'll do the pouring out.

MUTE. Full enough! Full enough! Have a drink, Blindman. (*Sings.*)

Spring again; buds and basking;  
Kyomizu, Kyomizu!  
Ask and get, all 's for asking;  
Love among the leaves.

(*All sing together.*)

MUTE. Ha, ha! A fine song, is n't it? The bottle's with me. Fill up. Now, Blindman, give us a little dance.

BLINDMAN. Anything for sport! Shall I dance?

THE OTHER TWO. Good, good!

BLINDMAN. Sing, then.

THE OTHER TWO. We're with you.

BLINDMAN (*sings*).

Down the hill a friar slim,  
At his waist a conch-shell,  
See his hands the beads tell!  
Shall I ask across the fence?  
Whither, friar, and from whence,  
Prythee, priest so prim?

THE OTHER TWO. Fine! *Zaranza, zaranza!*

MUTE. Another drink. Come, Cripple, can't you dance a step?

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CRIPPLE. Shall I do a dance?

THE OTHER TWO. Good! Good!

CRIPPLE (*sings and dances*).

Sweet boy, hey and ho!  
Little drummer boy!  
Rap a tap, smiles and joy;  
Tap a rap, soft and coy;  
Chichi ta-popo!  
Does it speak, is it dumb,  
Little boy and drum?

THE OTHER TWO. Fine! Fine! Come along; each in turn. Now, Mute, a dance.

MUTE. Away I go! (*Sings and dances*.)

The joiner's daughter wears a gown,  
A gown that put men's hearts to proof.  
Planes and chisels run adown  
Her shapely shoulders; at her waist  
Adze and mallet deftly traced,  
With cunning trick of warp and woof.  
Aye, but see you, saw and file  
Enter not this maiden's style.  
Line and rule she doth disdain.  
Round her skirt's edge shavings curl;  
Blows the spring breeze, puff and whirl!  
Love, the time to part is here;  
Waits the swift ship at the pier.  
Maiden, will he come again?

(*The HOUSEHOLDER is seen approaching.*)

HOUSEHOLDER. The infirm folks are looking after things in my absence, but somehow I feel uneasy. I'll get home quickly. (*Getting near.*) What can this mean? Sounds of a revel! (*Enters in the midst of the singing and dancing.*) Here! Hulloo! The blindman's eyes

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are open! The cripple's jumping around! The mute's singing! Oh, you rascals! Oh, you robbers! Hi! Hi!

THE THREE MEN. Ugh! He's back. What shall we do! (*The MUTE shuts his eyes tightly and cries for pardon; the CRIPPLE springs up and throws himself on his knees, mumbling, "Wa-a-a!" the BLINDMAN begins to crawl around.*)

HOUSEHOLDER (*to CRIPPLE*). You were a cripple and now you're a mute. Robber! Villain! I sha'n't let you off.

CRIPPLE. Oh, forgive me, Sir! There! I'm a cripple again!

HOUSEHOLDER (*to MUTE*). You were a mute and now you're a chattering blindman?

MUTE. Wa-a-a!

HOUSEHOLDER. At it again, are you? Thief! I'll give it to you (*beating him*).

MUTE. Oh! Ah! Let us off, let us off!

HOUSEHOLDER. I sha'n't! I sha'n't!<sup>1</sup>

The old pastime of competitive verse-making continued to be practised in this era, but owing in part to the comparative illiteracy of the military men, who now formed a prominent element of society, and in part to the general decay of classical learning, the quality of a composition ceased to be of prime importance, and people preferred to amuse themselves capping verses. One person gave an opening line, a competition then followed as to who should first discover a suitable sequel. The "linked poems" (*renka*) thus produced had little literary merit, and were sometimes carried to extravagant length, as many

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 22.

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as a hundred lines being chained together by the flimsiest links. In this matter also the love of elaboration and the tendency to formalism that have been noted already in connection with other refined pursuits, asserted themselves. Minute formulæ were laid down for the guidance of composers and for testing excellence; styles were divided into "subjective" and "objective," and some professors of the art went so far as to allege a knowledge of "mysteries" invisible to ordinary folks. The Emperor Go-tsuchi-mikado (1465-1499) received the name of "beneath the blossom" in recognition of his skill as a composer of *renka*, and many names of "masters" have been handed down to posterity. This was certainly the most frivolous of Japan's literary pursuits. In reading its products the student is constantly obliged to recall the impressionist proclivity of Japanese art, whether pictorial or poetical; its delight in expressing ideas by a few strong strokes of the brush or a few cleverly compacted ideographs.

He that fame would find,  
Must not balance life to lose.  
*So the bowman's way*  
*Leads him ever face to foe.*

Note of cuckoo heard  
From the nest of nightingale.  
*Green plum peeping out*  
*From the midst of April's bloom.*



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The italicised portions represent the coupled lines. It would seem that literature in this form had a special charm for the *samurai*, and that he found it sufficiently interesting to occupy his brief intervals of leisure even on campaign. History tells of a military noble, Miyoshi, who attended a *renka* party where the theme to be capped was

Soft eularia and  
Rushes in green company.

While the convives sat searching for an apt couplet, a letter was handed to Miyoshi. He read it, and after a moment's thought composed these lines,—

*Shallow grows the swamp  
Changing slowly to a field.*

The couplet having been received with acclaim, Miyoshi said quietly: "This letter brings me news that my troops have been defeated and that my brother Saneyoshi was killed in the fight. Our verse, then, is the last gift I shall receive in my lifetime." Thereupon he went out and fell in battle.

In the Military epoch there was constant display of a satirical habit of mind, which has always marked the Japanese people, and is at least as strong to-day as it ever was. The Chinese language, and the Japanese in a lesser degree, lend themselves readily to a species of irony which owes its force almost entirely to plays

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upon words. This fatal facility has certainly tended to produce shallowness of thought by tempting men to substitute mere puns for wit and humour, though it is an extravagance to say, as some have said, that both of these latter qualities are wanting in the mental equipment of the Japanese. Wit is rarely found among any people, wherever it be sought, but it is not rarer in Japan than in Occidental countries, and humour abounds. What is spoken of here, however, is ironical levity which brings all subjects, grave or gay, terrible or trivial, within legitimate range of a *jeu-de-mot*. Thus, when, in the middle of the tenth century, the arch traitor Masakado was killed and his head exposed in Kyōtō, one of the Fujiwara nobles composed a couplet owing its attraction solely to the facts that Masakado had been struck down by a blow on the "temple" (*kome-kami*), which is a homonym for "rice eating," and that his conqueror was Tawara Tōda, whose first name is synonymous with "rice bag." It is comprehensible that such trivialities should provoke a smile, but this punning couplet actually became a popular song so well did it fit the fancy of the time. Frequently such effusions were anonymous: their authors wrote them in a disguised hand and posted them in some public place. Thus, when a certain Saito Dōsan of Mino in the province of Owari killed his liege lords, one of whom had married his daughter,

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and appropriated their estates, he found a couplet placarded throughout his camp : —

One's liege lord to slay,  
One's son-in-law to slaughter,  
Seems to be the vogue  
In Mino of Owari.

“Mi-no-owari” has also the significance of “fate,” or “the end of all things,” and in this punning allusion is to be found the whole point of the verse.

It may almost be said that in the absence of a newspaper press public opinion found in the composition of anonymous verselets a vehicle for expressing itself. They did not all derive their interest solely from *jeu-de-mots*. Many were political criticisms undisfigured by any such verbal devices, — political, that is to say, in the sense attaching to the term among men who gave no thought to such matters as popular representation, forms of government or party platforms, since they had only one orthodox, though often violated, code of action, fealty to a liege lord ; only one ideal of success, the assertion of military prowess, and only one object of pursuit, the assertion of family interests.

When Kiyomori created a social panic by removing the capital from Kyōtō, with all its classical associations and sensuous delights, to the bleak, uninteresting, and vulgarly new Fukuhara, an indignant critic set up by the wayside a plac-

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ard predicting that fate had evil things in store for a family so infatuated as "to abandon the city of flowers in full bloom and go forth into the bleak wilderness;" and when the Taira leader, Koremori, returned with an army which had failed to effect anything against the rival house of Minamoto, a writing was found next morning on the gate of his stronghold declaring that he was rushing to his ruin as swiftly as the current of Fuji River leaped towards the sea. Displays of cowardice, departures from the "path of the soldier," or acts of disloyalty, seldom failed to evoke satirical censure of this nature, and a cleverly turned couplet was as potent to invoke public ridicule or execration as is a leading article in a modern newspaper.

It will be observed that the middle and lower orders have not been spoken of in connection with the pursuits and pastimes here described. But they were not wholly excluded. They had their tea ceremonials, their incense parties, their dancing, their landscape gardening, and above all, their gambling, fashioned after aristocratic models, though on a greatly reduced scale. They had also their religious festivals and their fêtes, which will be spoken of independently. It was always characteristic of the Japanese that the fashions of the "upper ten" found imitators on the lowest planes of society. This is especially true in the matter of dancing. From the sixteenth century it became the custom to organise general





CEREMONY ON THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF A GUEST.



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dances throughout the whole of the seventh month (modern August) in the capital and its vicinity. At first these were confined to the higher classes, brilliancy and richness of costume being an essential. But by degrees the circle widened, and in the days when Oda Nobunaga, the *Taikō*, and Tokugawa Iyeyasu were engaged in restoring peace and order, autumn dances began to be organised by the mercantile, manufacturing, and agricultural orders, aristocrats taking the place of spectators. These and other popular dances will be referred to in a future chapter.

Wrestling was a favourite exercise of the Japanese *samurai* from the earliest time. When first heard of historically, two decades before the commencement of the Christian era, it presents itself simply as the art of applying one's strength to the best advantage for the destruction of an enemy. There were no rules, no restrictions, no vetoes; only devices. Kicking, striking, gripping anywhere and anyhow; attacking the most vital parts of the body — all were permissible. A man sought only to kill his adversary, and if, after throwing him, he could break bones or ribs by stamping, or kicking, or pounding with the knees, success was complete. The earliest historical wrestler served his opponent in that manner. One of the Emperor Suinin's (B. C. 29–70 A. D.) Palace guards, Tayema no Kehaya, or "Tayema the quick-kicker," had such thews

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that no one could stand against him, and his truculent, quarrelsome disposition made him universally hated. It is characteristic of the methods of early Japanese sovereigns, that, although this man was an object of dread to all the courtiers, and although his daily deeds of violence made him a general terror, no way of getting rid of him presented itself except to seek some one who might overmatch him. The custom of that time was to summon the strongest men in the country to be the sovereign's guards. Tayema had been one of such a levy. A second summons subsequently brought a batch of recruits, among whom was Nomi no Sukune. He challenged Tayema. The encounter took place in the presence of the Emperor and the Court nobles, and Nomi threw Tayema and kicked him to death. It is thus evident that there were authorised displays of wrestling in those days, but nothing is known as to the science of the practice, and its ferocious nature cannot have recommended it to a nation which has never shown a love for sports so deadly as those formerly popular among the Romans and the Spaniards. Nomi no Sukune is said to have modified the art, reduced its methods to a recognised system, and deprived it of its deadly character. Such action would have been consistent with his traditional conduct in other matters, but the annals of Japan are doubtful evidence when they deal with incidents twenty centuries old.



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Curiously enough, wrestling is next heard of under the patronage of a lady, the Empress Kōgyoku. She assembled the strong men among her subjects and made them wrestle for the entertainment of Korean envoys. Apparently the art had then become a pastime robbed of its brutal features; an inference which is finally confirmed by the records of the Emperor Shomu (724-728). This is the same sovereign who erected the celebrated *Dai-Butsu* of Nara and showed extraordinary zeal for the promotion of Buddhism. It is easy to conceive that the kind of wrestling approved by him was not likely to be a murderous combat. He included it among the regular sports of the harvest-thanksgiving in the month of August, and thenceforth the "wrestler's fête" (*sumo-no-sechiye*) is classed in the same category with the "Boys' Celebration," or the "Lantern Festival." Shomu's idea was to promote muscle-developing exercises. He invited strong men from all parts of the Empire, and the Court nobles matched the rivals, compiling lists of the pairs just as is done to-day. Thus from a deadly struggle the practice was transformed into a harmless trial of strength and skill. Its fortunes thenceforward reflected the course of politics. During the sway of the effeminate Fujiwara, it dropped almost completely out of vogue, to be revived by the warlike Emperor Gotoba (1186-1198), and again discarded after his death, when for three and a half centuries the Imperial city

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eschewed it, and the military men throughout the provinces took it up, treating it as one of the exercises that a soldier should practise. Thereafter it was classed with the dances and mimetic dramas performed at shrines and temples in honour of the deities and to attract monetary contributions, and *Kanjin-zumo*, or wrestling displays for charitable purposes, became one of the regular performances of the time. The professional wrestler made his appearance at this stage, and the *yose-zumo*, or "collection of wrestlers," is for the first time mentioned. By *yose-zumo*, as then practised, is to be understood a kind of wrestling in which a champion set up a booth and challenged all comers, meeting them one after another until he was ousted from the championship or confirmed in it. Such a method suited the mood of the Military epoch, and was so zealously patronised by the great captains, Oda Nobunaga and Hideyoshi (the *Taikō*), that the *samurai* of the sixteenth century paid almost as much attention to wrestling as to archery or swordsmanship. Under the Tokugawa Regents, who had their court in Yedo, the sport was not less popular. In the year 1630 an athlete, Akashi Shiganosuke, opened lists at Yotsu-ya in that city, and for six days held his own against the strongest men of the time. Shiganosuke is as famous in Japan to-day as though he had been an illustrious scholar or a great legislator. But some fierce quarrels broke out among the *samurai* who

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attended his *yose*,<sup>1</sup> and the Tokugawa Government, always drastic in its methods, interdicted the practice of the art altogether. This veto held for thirty-seven years, when once again wrestling was revived in its mediæval form of *Kanjin-zumo*, that is to say, a charitable performance at religious festivals. Since then it has held a firm place in popular favour, and the profession now attracts scores of men who find in it a profitable and honourable pursuit.

That is the history of the art in outline, but greater interest attaches to its methods. These appear to have been elaborated with considerable care during the reign of Shomu (724-728), and many features of the system then established remain without change to the present time. The champion of Shomu's reign was Seirin, commonly called "Shiga Seirin," because he came from Shiga on the borders of Lake Biwa. He is said to have been invincible, and the title of *Hote-yaku* (expert) was conferred on him, the next in point of skill being distinguished as *Hote-waki* (assistant expert), or simply *Suke-te* (assistant). All the others were called *Riki-shi* (athlete) or *Sumo-bito* (wrestler). They were not "commoners" (*heimin*): they all belonged to the military class. In further recognition of Seirin's prowess, his province, Omi, was regarded as the centre of strength and taken as a basis of division, the other athletes being distinguished as "Eastern" or

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 21.



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“Western” according to the position of their birthplaces with regard to Omi. Hence arose the Eastern and Western camps into which wrestlers are to-day divided. In Seirin’s time the men of the East wore a hollyhock flower in the hair for distinguishing badge, and the men of the West employed a convolvulus in the same way. Thus it came about that the term “flower path” (*hana-michi*) was applied to the place where these athletes made their entries and exits; a term subsequently used to designate the approach to all stages for mimetic dances or dramatic performances. The holding of the ring against all comers was not the only form of contest in that era. The men of the East were regularly paired against the men of the West, match lists being compiled, and the office of umpire (*giyōji*) being conferred on Seirin and his descendants for all time. Seirin’s family discharged the function, often only nominal, for fourteen generations, until the year 1183, when, the last representative dying childless, the Emperor Gotoba (1190) conferred the post on Yoshida Iyenaga, a squire of the celebrated Minamoto chieftain, Kiso Yoshinaka. Yoshida’s family thenceforth became the *Tsukasa-ke* (directing house) of all wrestlers in the Empire, its representative in each generation taking the name “Oikade” (conferred on Yoshida by the sovereign), and holding the second grade of the fifth official rank, which is the rank of a prefectural governor in modern



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times. The Emperor also gave to Yoshida a "war fan" having inscribed on it the legend *ichimi-seifu* ("one taste pure wind," signifying that there is only one perfect style of wrestling), and to this day the umpire, still a representative of the Yoshida family, may be seen carrying the sacred fan as he steps into the ring. With the *Tsukasa-ke* rests the sole right of conferring upon the great champion of the era, the man who has remained undefeated for six years consecutively, the badge of premiership, a girdle formed of two thick strands of white straw, finely plaited, with tapering ends and short streamers suspended from it — a facsimile, in short, of the rope festooned over the lintels of houses at New Year's time. It is not known when the badge of supremacy took this form, but the wrestlers' records show that there have been only seventeen premier champions since history began to be written. The holder of the coveted distinction at present is Oozutsu Manyemon, who has achieved the unparalleled feat of conquering all comers for nine consecutive years. It is the champion's privilege to perform a solitary pantomime in the ring at intervals during the period — ten days — of a performance. This *dohyo-iri*, as it is called, is a stately and ceremonious business. First stalks in a "dew-remover" (*tsuyu-harai*), carrying a bow. *Tsuyu-harai* is the name given to the vassal marching in advance of a nobleman to clear away every obstruction, even dew-drops; and the

bow commemorates the fact that Oda Nobunaga conferred that weapon upon Miai Ganyemon, who worsted all opponents on the occasion (1570 A. D.) of a great wrestling-match organised by Nobunaga's order at Joraku-ji in Omi. After the champion an attendant enters bearing a sword, in token of the fact that Tokugawa Iyeyasu honoured the strongest wrestler of his era by a gift of a sword, the highest distinction that can be conferred even on a soldier. The champion wears a magnificently embroidered silk apron, above which the *yoko-zuna* (silk belt) is knotted. Having solemnly thrown his limbs into certain ordered postures, he takes the bow and describes some picturesque but meaningless curves with it. The old-fashioned title of *Hote-yaku* is no longer employed. The premier champion is called *Yoko-zuna*; the two champions of the East and West are known as *O-zeki*; the assistant champions are termed *Seki-waki*, and the second assistant champions have the curious and unexplained name of *Komusubi* (little knot). The *O-zeki*, like the *Yoko-zuna*, are privileged to enter the ring and posture before the audience, but in their case it is a divided glory, for they make their *entrée* together.

The Japanese wrestler is generally a man of fine stature and grand muscular development. His proportions differ so greatly from those of the generality of his countrymen, that by some observers he has been supposed to belong to a

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distinct race. But there is no basis for such a theory. Among the rural and sea-coast population of Japan men of splendid physique are to be found. The wrestler is one of these. There is no mystery about his origin. A country lad gifted with conspicuously fine thews conceives the ambition of becoming a wrestler, and makes application to one of the old masters, who takes him as a pupil, supporting him during his period of training, which is long and arduous. At last, if he shows sufficient aptitude, his name is placed on the roll of wrestlers, and he makes his *début* in the ring at the Yeko-in in Tokyo. The Yeko-in is a temple where were buried, in 1657, the charred and unidentifiable remains of an immense multitude of people — tradition says over a hundred thousand — who perished in one of the stupendous conflagrations by which that city has been periodically visited. Funds to procure the performance of Buddhist rites for the souls of these unfortunates were collected, according to mediæval custom, by performances of dances, mimes, and wrestling, and from that time the place became the wrestlers' metropolitan circus. Twice every year, in January and in May, tournaments are held there. They continue for ten days, and by their results the rank of each athlete is determined until the ensuing tourney. It is a common supposition among foreigners that the issue of a match is often arranged beforehand, and that the combatants merely simulate com-



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petition. That is never the case at the Yeko-in, though it may possibly happen at performances in the provinces. The wrestler cannot afford to trifle with his duties at the Yeko-in. He enters the arena once every second day, or five times altogether during a tournay. On his first appearance he becomes entitled to a daily salary the equivalent of two shillings, and if he loses more than one out of his five bouts, he cannot look for an increase of emoluments. Four victories and one defeat, or three victories and two draws, entitle him to an additional sixpence, and five victories raise his stipend to three shillings. Thus working his way gradually upward, he reaches the coveted figure of twenty shillings (10 *yen*), obtains a place (*seki*) among the names printed in capitals on the roll, and is called a *Seki-tori* (placeholder), or, less aristocratically, a *juryo-dori* (ten-*yen*-receiver). Seventy shillings is the limit of his regular earnings at one tournay, and whatever his stipend, he never fails to hand over a liberal portion to his teacher. But this sum, which is paid by the lessee, represents only a fraction of the successful wrestler's earnings. His progress is keenly watched by numerous enthusiasts among the audience, and often when he spreads his victorious arms in the ring, the cheering onlookers doff their mantles or surcoats and fling them at his feet, redeeming them afterwards for substantial sums. Besides, in the intervals between the Yeko-in tournays, the wrestlers travel from place



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to place in the great cities and in the provinces, and the portion of their earnings that falls to their share in connection with these performances is a matter of arrangement with the lessee. The latter also furnishes them with food and drink — meat and *sake* (rice-beer) — in unlimited quantities. They observe no regimen in their diet, for obesity, so long as it does not interfere with their muscular efficiency, is an advantage; the greater their weight, the greater being their inertia, which, as will presently be understood, is a gain to Japanese wrestlers, though the vast accumulations of adipose tissue that some of them display seem at once repulsive and unworkmanlike to Occidental eyes. There is a strictly observed system of etiquette with regard to the manner of serving their meals, but it has no special interest except as the only etiquette with which their lives conform. For the continence and self-restraint elsewhere considered essential to the development of a high type of muscular energy are not observed with any strictness by these Japanese athletes. Many a career of high promise is wrecked on its threshold by sensual excess.

To adhere strictly to a chronological system in tracing the developments of every Japanese custom, would sometimes necessitate fragmentary and bewildering treatment. Wrestling is one of the subjects that does not lend itself to such division. The important position it occupied as a part of every *samurai's* training during

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the Military epoch entitles it to a place here, whereas its practice as a professional art belongs more properly to a later era. For obvious reasons, however, to say now at once what has to be said about it will be convenient, and as it is one of the Japanese institutions that specially attract the attention of foreigners visiting the Far East, no apology is needed for speaking of it with some minuteness.

In truth, the science of wrestling as seen in Japan must be classed as one of the things that are essentially Japanese. Its exact counterpart is not to be found in any other country. The wrestlers at the Olympic Games, in the Circus, in Nineveh and in Egypt, stood facing each other from the first, and while they resorted to various tactics of pulling, pushing, twisting the body, interlocking the limbs, and even hitting, their ultimate aim was to obtain the mastery over one another's legs and thus secure a fall. But in the Japanese science of wrestling, as practised since the eighth century, the fall is always a subordinate incident, the principal object being to force the adversary out of a circular ring fifteen feet in diameter. As in Greece and Rome, so also in Japan, the wrestler is almost completely naked, wearing nothing but a loin-cloth and a girdle. The combatants are required to begin by squatting opposite to each other in the centre of the ring, and the umpire stands close by, his prime duty being to see that

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at the moment when they spring upright to commence the play, neither has the slightest advantage in priority of rising or in difference of inhalation. Sometimes this prefatory performance occupies several minutes, for when the men are well matched and highly skilled, they attach importance to points of the most trifling nature, quite imperceptible to ordinary observers. At last, rising erect on terms of absolute equality, and receiving the signal from the umpire, they begin to fence for grips, or to make thrusting motions with the hands, or even to butt with the head. In this part of the contest the onlooker might conclude that there were no limitations whatever. The arms, the legs, the girdle, the neck, the throat, — in short, every part of an adversary's body may be seized, and it is even lawful to slap the face with the open hand, though such a manœuvre seldom commends itself on account of the dangerous opportunity it offers to a nimble adversary. Kicking alone is seen to be strictly forbidden. But this absence of restraining rule is only apparent. Every grip or thrust has to be strictly conformed to what is called the "direct" principle; that is to say, a combatant must not divide his force and apply it in opposite directions so as to produce what are mathematically termed "moments." For example, to deliver a downward thrust on an opponent's arm while forcing his wrist upward, or to bend his fingers



back while pulling his fore-arm forward, is foul play, and any wrestler resorting to such tricks would be at once expelled from the ring and forbidden to practise his profession.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, although the prime aim is to thrust an adversary from the ring, a throw also counts decisively ; not a throw with complicated conditions, as in the French or Cornish style, but a fall constituted by touching the ground with any part of the body except the soles of the feet. To drop on one knee, or even to lay a finger on the sand of the arena, amounts to defeat. The skilled expert, however, never deliberately tries for a throw. His body bent slightly forward, his legs firmly braced, he carefully parries his opponent's attempts to get a favourable hold, and, on his own part, avoids with equal care any undue impetuosity of attack or extreme muscular effort such as might impair his power of resilience. It follows from the purpose to be achieved that the acme of skill consists in exerting a maximum of force with a minimum disturbance of position, just as a master of the rapier confines the area of his lunges and parries to a circle of minute radius. Hence the finest displays of Japanese wrestling seem less interesting to an uninitiated observer than the comparatively brisk and violent struggles of amateur combatants. Further, it is the umpire's care to interpose before the point of exhaustion has been

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 22.



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reached, and, after an interval of rest, to replace the men in exactly the same grips they had before the interruption, the idea of these pauses being to prevent any unscientific exercise of brute force. If the course of the contest satisfies the umpire that neither man is likely to gain an advantage over the other, he declares the bout "divided" (*hiki-wake*), and if there occurs a perplexity which the elders of the ring cannot agree to solve, the umpire says "we take chare" (*o-azukari*), and again the struggle is drawn. Absolute good temper prevails. The wrestler is generally an uneducated man of low origin, but roughness and violence are foreign to his disposition, and he possesses the Japanese characteristic of being able to accept his reverses or welcome his successes with unflinching equanimity.

The whole science of wrestling is supposed to be comprised in forty-eight devices, — "forty-eight hands," as they are called, — namely, twelve thrusts, twelve grasps, twelve twists, and twelve under-grips, each having a distinctive name, — another example of the extraordinary elaboration to which every art and every pastime is carried in Japan. It is a commonly entertained belief that these have never been changed since they were reduced to rule in the eighth century. But that is a fallacy. Various celebrities in successive ages added methods of their own, and a thorough master of the craft in the present era must be

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acquainted with about one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty "hands." Thus, during the Military epoch, when wrestling had a place scarcely second to archery and fencing in a soldier's training, great captains like Hatake-yama, Kāwazu-no-Saburo, and Moritano-no-Goro, were as famous for wrestling as for the leadership of soldiers, and the forty-eight "hands" received various additions from them.

Wrestling in Japan has its esoterics. They are founded on the Chinese philosophy of the Ch'i. The easiest way to explain this is to describe the arena. There is a circular ring covered with sand, its circumference formed by sixteen bags of sand laid end to end. Entrances are made on the east and west by removing two of these bags; over the ring a roof is supported on four equidistant pillars, and under the eaves of the roof there is suspended a narrow curtain, which used formerly to be of black cloth with a conventional wave pattern, but is now purple. These things are all allegorical. The ring represents the primordial circle, chaos. The entrances, forming the ideograph "two," represent the primæval forces (the *Yin* and the *Yang*) from whose interactions all things were evolved. The four pillars represent the four seasons — that on the east, draped in blue, is spring; that on the west, draped in white, autumn; that on the south, draped in red, summer; and that on the north, draped in black, winter. The sixteen sand-bags represent

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two groups of the Eight Diagrams,<sup>1</sup> and the black eaves-curtain with its design of white waves represents the passion-calming element. At the base of each pillar sits an expert, whom age has compelled to retire from the arena, and who has acted as teacher to the men in the ring. Near him is placed a vessel of water with a wine-cup beside it, and wrestlers, before a contest, take a draught of this water, in deference to the old custom of warriors on the eve of a perilous undertaking who exchanged a "water-cup" (*mizu-sakazuki*) in token of farewell that might be for ever. The relations of the wrestlers to their teacher are the poetical phase of their career. They still regulate their treatment of him by the ancient formula of reverence, that to tread even within three feet of his shadow is disrespectful. Altogether the Japanese wrestler has no counterpart elsewhere. The nature of his profession is not reflected in his daily life; though uneducated, he knows how to conduct himself with propriety in the high society to which his patrons often introduce him; he has a fine moral code of his own which holds him in the path of honest manliness, and the crime of abusing his strength is almost unrecorded against him.

It has already been noted that the Japanese swordsman practised an art called by various names at different epochs or by different schools, but having for its fundamental principle the sub-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 23.



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stitution of subtlety for strength. This method of parrying or delivering an attack has now begun to attract attention in Europe, and is enthusiastically studied in Japan under the name of *ju-jutsu* or *ju-dō*, a term of which the nearest English equivalent is the "art of pliancy." *Ju-jutsu* does not appear to have been familiar to the Japanese in ancient eras. At any rate, they were not acquainted with it in the elaborate form that it assumed during the seventeenth century. According to the view of some historians, its methods were first taught by a Chinese immigrant at that time. But nothing of the kind has ever been known to exist in China. The probability, if not the certainty, is that what *ju-jutsu* received from China was merely some new plans for disabling an adversary by striking or kicking; and that, since this happened at a time when the art had passed out of vogue, its professors tried to bring about a *renaissance* by magnifying the value of the Chinese innovations. In point of fact, such innovations were discordant with the true spirit of the system, which aimed, not at breaking down force by force, nor yet at initiating assaults, but at utilising an enemy's strength for his own destruction, and at rendering his attacks suicidal. It may be supposed, on superficial reflection, that to set up a distinction between such an art and wrestling is pedantic. In a sense that is true. If by "wrestling" is understood every possible device for overthrowing an



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opponent, then *ju-jutsu* is wrestling. But it is not Japanese wrestling. In the first place, Japanese wrestling absolutely forbids every dangerous resolution of force into components acting in opposite directions, whereas *ju-jutsu* puts such resolution in the forefront of its methods. In the second place, Japanese wrestling has for its object the development of strength in excess of that of an adversary, whereas *ju-jutsu* seeks primarily to divert an adversary's force into directions fatal to his own equilibrium. So essential is the difference between the two arts that while success in wrestling depends theoretically on preponderance of force on the side of the victor, success in *ju-jutsu* is promoted by preponderance of force on the side of the vanquished. A skilled wrestler of great thews fares worse than a feeble tyro at the hands of a *ju-jutsu* expert. The science starts from the mathematical principle that the stability of a body is destroyed so soon as the vertical line passing through its centre of gravity falls outside its base. To achieve disturbance of equilibrium in accordance with that principle, the *ju-jutsu* player may throw himself on the ground by way of preliminary to throwing his opponent, a sequence of proceedings that would, of course, be suicidal in wrestling. In fact, to know how to fall is as essential a part of his science as to know how to throw. Checking, disabling by blows delivered in special parts of the body, paralysing an opponent's limb by applying a "breaking

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moment " to it, — all these are branches of the science, but it has its root in making an enemy undo himself by his own strength. These principles may be seen strikingly illustrated in any of the schools in Tōkyō, where weak striplings not yet out of their teens easily gain the mastery over stalwart men. On the abolition of feudalism after the Restoration in 1867, *ju-jutsu* shared the decadence that befell everything patronised by the *samurai* of early eras. But it was subsequently revived by Professor K. Kano, an eminent educationist, and it is now taught gratuitously in two large institutions organised by him in Tōkyō, as well as at many of the chief seats of learning throughout the Empire. Every police-constable is required to go through a course, and the result of his instruction is that he can generally master the strongest malefactor without difficulty. Evidently to explain such a system in writing would require a special treatise with elaborate illustrations. It may be stated, however, that the novice passes through three preliminary classes, and then reaches the first of the ten stages into which the science proper is divided. Six of the stages are devoted to physical training and four to moral discipline, the time required to graduate in the whole course being ten years. Before matriculation every pupil must take an oath to obey the rules implicitly, and he learns not merely the art of overcoming an adversary, but also the science of resuscitating persons who have been temporarily

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disabled, whether by his own devices or by certain other kinds of accident. It may appear curious that moral training should form part of the course, but the students of *ju-jutsu*, or *ju-dō* (the path of pliancy), claim a great deal for it in the latter respect. Mr. T. Shidachi, in a paper read before the Japan Society in London in 1892, has this to say about the moral side of the art: "Respect and kindness, fidelity and sincerity are essential points which *ju-dō* students should particularly observe. We come by daily training to know that irritability is one of our weakest points, and that we have to try to avoid it in our life, as it facilitates our opponents' efforts to overcome us. Not to be irritated by any emergency, but to be always calm and composed is one of the first principles of *ju-dō*. Prudence, precaution, temperance, perseverance, presence of mind, quick discernment, decision after deliberation, animation, self-respect, and self-control, — all these are moral qualities inculcated by the study of *ju-dō*. Greatness of mind, obedience to duty, and abhorrence of extravagance should be cultivated with no less attention. The influence which *ju-dō* exerts on intellectual power is no less important. The strict attention we have to give to daily duties is acknowledged. . . . I take the liberty of saying that I have received conscious benefit to my faculties of concentration and observation by the study of *ju-dō*." A measure of enthusiasm certainly presided at the compila-

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tion of this list of advantages, and several of the moral results here claimed for *ju-dō* would be equally attained by any system of well-directed discipline. But *ju-dō* is one of Japan's unique possessions, and her estimate of its nature may fairly claim attention.



## Chapter III

### THE EARLY TOKUGAWA TIMES

THE two greatest figures of mediæval Japan, if not the two greatest in her whole history, are Hideyoshi, the *Taikō*, and Tokugawa Iyeyasu. Contemporaries and therefore rivals, as was inevitable under the circumstances of their era, that they avoided fatal collision must be counted one of the clearest evidences of their astuteness. They did once meet in battle, and the *Taikō*, for all his military genius, suffered defeat. But thereafter they lived in concord, and the Tokugawa chief, surviving Hideyoshi and becoming the administrative head of the nation, organised a system of government which gave to the country two and a half centuries of tranquillity. Iyeyasu, had he respected his pledges, should have applied himself to secure to the *Taikō's* son, Hideyori, the supreme place won by Hideyoshi's genius. But the ethics of the age did not require any such sacrifice of personal ambition. The Tokugawa chief not only crushed the man he had promised to support, but deliberately contrived an oppor-

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tunity for crushing him, and posterity does not count the act a crime.

Campaigns, battles, and political intrigues do not find a place in these volumes; else there would be much to tell about the events which raised the Tokugawa to supremacy. A pathetic figure lends special interest to the last act of the drama; the figure of the beautiful Yodo, the *Taikō's* favourite mistress and mother of the lad to whom he vainly bequeathed the fruits of his splendid victories and still more brilliant statesmanship. Left a widow at twenty-two, Yodo devoted herself uniquely to her son's cause, and in the final fight, when she and he, shut up in the castle of Osaka, had been refused quarter by Iyeyasu and saw death coming steadily closer, the lady and her band of handmaidens did soldier's service, and at the supreme moment died by their own hands.

Iyeyasu then stood without a rival in the whole Empire. To other leaders opportunities equally great had presented themselves, but to utilise them as he utilised them required a genius for organisation which he alone seems to have possessed, and a power of analysing the lessons of history which few have equalled.

The first problem to be considered was the position of the Emperor. It has been shown in these pages that the doctrine of the Mikado's divine descent survived all the vicissitudes of Imperial life. Weeds might flourish in the ne-

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glected courtyards of the Kyōtō Palace; the corpse of an Emperor might lie uninterred for weeks through lack of money to perform the funeral rites; sovereigns might be held prisoners by haughty subjects, or compelled to abdicate at the first display of a tendency to exercise independent governing sway; but the theory of the monarch's sacrosanctity remained practically unchallenged. Even to-day, when the merciless scalpel of the critic lays open the mummy-cases of antiquity, and discloses dust and emptiness in places peopled by tradition with figures of splendid humanity, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a Japanese writer bold enough to scrutinise the legends that environ the Throne. Side by side with such companions as constitutional government, parliamentary institutions, and freedom of speech and pen, faith in the sovereign's direct descent from heavenly ancestors seems strangely incongruous. But it still abides, and Iyeyasu had to reckon with it in his day. Trespasses upon the Imperial prerogatives had greatly helped to undermine the power of the Fujiwara, the Taira, and the Hōjō. Iyeyasu had to provide against that error in the case of himself and his descendants. He had also to provide that the sovereign should no longer be a puppet in the hands of ambitious nobles, and that insurrection against his own administrative authority should no longer be able to borrow legitimacy from an enforced semblance of Imperial sanction. These ends he

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compassed by giving, on the one hand, a full measure of recognition to the divinity of the Throne's occupant, and by enforcing, on the other, the logical sequence of that doctrine. The descendant of the gods must be completely divested of all executive functions, these passing absolutely and unquestionably into the hands of the *Shōgun*, who should exercise them without any reference to the sovereign, accepting, in return, full responsibility for the public peace and good order of the country which he thus undertook to govern. No command of the Emperor could have the force of law unless it received the counter-signature of one of the *Shōgun's* chief officials. In short, nothing was left to the sovereign except the prerogative of conferring honours and titles. His seclusion was made more complete than ever. Progresses, state visits to shrines, ambassadorial audiences, — such things passed out of His Majesty's existence. The great territorial magnates were forbidden to visit the Palace, or even to enter the quarter of Kyōtō in which it stood. The Court nobles might not intermarry with the families of the military chieftains unless the permission of the Government in Yedo had been obtained. These two classes were to be kept rigidly distinct. And never by either the one or the other might the Emperor's face be viewed. Even when the ministers of the Court approached the Throne, they saw nothing of their sovereign except the



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obscure outlines of a dark figure seated behind a semi-transparent curtain. But, though shorn of temporal power, the Emperor gained in mystical dignity. He received periodically the profound homage of the Yedo Regents. From him the living derived their titles ; the dead their apotheosis, and by an Imperial delegate even the *Shōgun* himself was invested. In the speech of the people he was always " the Son of Heaven ; " in their writings the line where his name figured might never be invaded by any other ideograph. A magnificent abstraction, the possibility of his becoming involved in any intrigue, voluntarily or involuntarily, grew more and more remote in proportion as his godlike dignity obtained fuller appreciation. That was the end contemplated by Iyeyasu. Against the head of the secular administration, the *Shōgun* in Yedo, who held his commission direct from the sovereign, every insurrection unsanctioned by the Emperor would be technically rebellion, and every insurgent a traitor to the Throne. Iyeyasu made it virtually impossible for any one to obtain that sanction or even to seek it.

Responsible government had never before existed in Japan, and Iyeyasu thus became the author of the first written constitution. The so-called constitution of Prince Shōtoku in the seventh century had been only a collection of moral maxims ; but now a document was drafted consisting of thirty-five articles, seventeen of

which, bearing the signatures of the Tokugawa chief and the Regent (*Kwampaku*) — the latter acting as the sovereign's representative — made provision for everything relating to the Imperial Court; and the remaining eighteen, which had the signature of Iyeyasu only, contained general administrative rules.

Having thus placed the relations of the *Shōgun's* administration and the Imperial Court on a clear basis, and having secured for the former virtually autocratic authority while leaving the latter's dignity nominally undisturbed, Iyeyasu took the map of feudal Japan and reconstructed it. Like everything really great, his principle of procedure was simple. Wherever risk could be discerned of coalitions hostile to his house, he inserted a wedge formed of his own partisans. Two hundred and thirty-seven military nobles held practically the whole of Japan in fief. One hundred and fifteen of these were Tokugawa vassals; men who owed their ranks and estates to his favour, and on whose fidelity it should have been possible to rely implicitly. He wove these two hundred and thirty-seven fiefs into a pattern such that one of the hundred and fifteen loyal threads always had a place between any two of the remainder whose fealty was doubtful or their revolt probable. Thus he bequeathed to his descendants a congeries of principalities so arranged as to offer automatic resistance to rebellion or anarchy.

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But while he seemed to be organising a feudal system, Iyeyasu made every effort, at the same time, to paralyse the strength of the feudatories. Without the *Shōgun's* permission they were forbidden to contract marriages, to build castles, to construct large ships, to make warlike preparations, or to found temples. A strict veto was also imposed on the passage of vassals from the service of one feudatory into that of another, and it was enacted that each feudal chief must spend a part of every second year in Yedo, and must leave his sons there always as hostages for his own fealty. The provision with regard to the sons was abolished in the middle of the seventeenth century, but not until 1862 did the obligation imposed on the feudatories themselves undergo any relaxation.

The effect of this system — *Sankin Kōtai*, as it was called — upon the prosperity and embellishment of Yedo, as well as upon the supremacy of the Tokugawa administration and the allegiance of the military nobles, is easily conceived. Not merely were the territorial chiefs thus brought into constant contact with the head of the government through whose grace they held their fiefs; not merely did their attendance in Yedo constitute a sign of their allegiance, — a sign that could be unerringly interpreted, — but Yedo itself became their capital. There they had to take their places and preserve their state among their peers, and the magnificent mansions that



a spirit of rivalry induced them to build, the brilliant equipages they supported, and the costly habits they cultivated, not only served as a wholesome drain on their resources, but also occupied their attention to the exclusion of politics and other dangerous topics. It was, indeed, a part of the Tokugawa chieftain's plan that the accumulation of wealth in the coffers of individuals should be carefully prevented. In his instructions for the guidance of his successors he laid down the principle that, whenever the opulence of any noble began to attract attention, the task of carrying out some great public work should be imposed upon him.

Iyeyasu excelled as an organiser. Victory in arms served him merely as a prelude to organisation. In that respect he differed from all his predecessors. They had been content to acquire power; his great aim was to consolidate it. They had sought chiefly to exalt their own houses; he sought to place himself at the head of an organised nation and an organised society. Yet he does not appear to have entertained any national ambition. He made peace with Korea on the easiest terms. He refused to assist the Ming dynasty against the Manchu invaders. He struck a fatal blow at maritime enterprise by causing all large ships to be destroyed, an act which his grandson, Iyemitsu, supplemented by an ordinance forbidding the construction of sea-going vessels. He may be said to have inaugu-



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rated the policy of hermetically sealing the country against foreign intercourse, though in that matter he obeyed the teaching of experience rather than the suggestion of inclination. His dying behest to his son and successor showed that the people occupied a large place in his thoughts, yet he made no attempt to improve the condition of the lower orders, being apparently persuaded that poverty and hardship were their appointed lot. Neither did he devise any system for rewarding merit, hereditary titles to office and emolument ranking higher, in his opinion, than individual qualifications.

It is a curious fact that the most commendable of his measures from an ethical point of view proved the principal means of undermining the organisation he had so cleverly devised. Thinking to soften the military spirit of the age, he bestowed open-handed patronage on literature and education. But literature in those days was derived altogether from China. Japanese scholars saw nothing worthy of study beyond Confucianism. Iyeyasu himself had not read deeply. Sharing the ignorance which characterised the military class in his time, he had no perception of the true spirit of Confucian and Mencian political philosophy. He issued an order that primers of the ancient learning should be procured and studied. The order was obeyed and the various feudal chiefs hastened to emulate its spirit, so that the Zen

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doctrines of Buddhism, which contributed so much to the development of the heroic and the sentimental, and were therefore favourable to the stability of military feudalism, gradually gave place to a theory that the only legitimate ruler was heaven-appointed; that the good of the people should be the first object of administration, and that to fail in achieving that good was to forfeit the title of administrator. Before the Tokugawa chief died he had himself imbibed something of this philosophy, and it was perhaps because he foresaw the tendency of the Chinese learning he had thus encouraged that, on his death-bed, he enjoined upon his successor the duty of taking care of the people before all things. He had unwittingly sown the seeds of a new revolution.

The continuity of historical repetition is especially marked in the case of Japan, where the same influences, undisturbed by any invasion of foreign ideas, remained in operation from generation to generation. The families of the Fujiwara, the Taira, and the Saionji had each in turn sought to perpetuate its power by furnishing a consort for the sovereign. The Tokugawa's impulse was to adopt the same device. A daughter of the second *Shōgun*, Hidetada, became Empress. It is recorded that eleven hundred and eighty chests were required to carry her trousseau, and that the costs of her outfit and of her journey to Kyōtō aggregated more than a million pounds



YOSHITSUNE'S HELMET (IRON); TWELFTH CENTURY.





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sterling, — a strange commentary on the doctrine of economy inculcated continually in the ordinances of the Tokugawa. Yet another point where the old habits re-asserted themselves was an attempt to transfer the administrative authority from its nominal repository, the *Shōgun*, to his chief minister, and the traditional analogy was completed by the intrusion of feminine intrigue into the drama. Hidetada's wife — a sister of the *Taikō's* celebrated mistress, Yōdo, whose heroic defence of the Osaka Castle and her pitiful death have been spoken of above, bore him two sons, for the younger of whom she used all her influence to secure the succession, and the chief minister having been won over to her cause, and hoping to become himself the real repository of power, headed one of the parties into which the *Shōgun's* Court became divided. Thus, even before the death of Iyeyasu, his house was threatened with a repetition of the drama enacted previously in the case of every family that had climbed to administrative supremacy, a drama that would doubtless have succeeded in the case of the Tokugawa also had not Iyeyasu emerged from his retirement to defeat it.

When the boy, Iyemitsu, against whom this plot had been directed, inherited the *Shōgunate*, he proved himself one of the greatest of the Tokugawa, as well as one of the most masterful. Assembling all the principal feudal chiefs, he made to them this speech: "My grandfather

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owed much to your assistance when he brought the Empire under his sway, and my father, remembering these things, naturally treated you rather as guests than as vassals. But my case is different. I was born to the headship of the country. I cannot regard you in the same light as the last *Shōgun* did. My relation to you must be that of sovereign to subject if good order is to be preserved. Should any among you find that relation irksome and desire to reverse it, I am prepared to decide the issue on the battle-field. Return to your own provinces and consider the question." This bold challenge astounded the assembled feudatories. They remained silent for a time, until Date Masamune, chief of Sendai fief, constituted himself spokesman: "We all bathe in the favour of the Tokugawa. If any one here entertains a disloyal purpose, I, Masamune, will be the first to attack him." After that no dissentient voice was raised: the supremacy of the Tokugawa became absolute and unchallenged.

Iyemitsu carried his conception of administrative autocracy to such a point that he did not hesitate to revoke acts of the Emperor. For the sovereign having bestowed titles and ranks on certain priests and members of the Imperial household, the *Shōgun* took back the former and rescinded the latter on the ground that his endorsement had not been obtained. The Emperor naturally observed that he might as well vacate

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the Throne if he were not permitted to reward even a monk ; and soon afterwards he did actually abdicate, after having been obliged to grant audience to the *Shōgun's* nurse.<sup>1</sup>

Thus early in the history of the Tokugawa administration a collision between the two Courts of Kyōtō and Yedo seemed imminent. But Iyemitsu averted the peril with characteristic vigour. He repaired to Kyōtō with a retinue of thirty-five thousand men-at-arms, raised the revenue of the Imperial Household from three thousand *koku* of rice (about as many sovereigns) to ten thousand *koku*, and distributed a hundred and twenty thousand *riyo* (appropriately one hundred and ninety-two thousand sovereigns) among the Court officials. He appears to have realised, even more clearly than his grandfather, Iyeyasu, that the stability of the *Shōgunate* system depended on the absolutism of its administration, and it will be seen presently that the system fell owing to the failure of his successors to follow his autocratic example.

But however large his conception of governing authority, he seems to have been, like his grandfather, entirely without ambition that his country should figure prominently on the stage of the world. He made no attempt to take advantage of the victories won in Siam by his nationals, Yamada Jinzayemon and Tsuda Matzayemon. He rejected renewed applications for

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 24.

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assistance from the *Ming* rulers, then reduced to the last extremity by the Manchu. He forbade Japanese subjects to travel abroad under penalty of death. He interdicted the building of sea-going ships. He closed the country to all foreigners except a few Dutchmen, and even they were not allowed to continue their trade except on condition of living a life of degraded ostracism on a little island in Nagasaki harbour. In short, he arrested Japan's international development, which then seemed full of promise, and he deliberately diverted her from opportunities that would have opened for her a great career, had she utilised them boldly.

It is necessary to elaborate this last point; to show what were the opportunities upon which Japan turned her back in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and to what motives her suicidal policy is attributable.

When Occidental commerce first invited Japan's participation, the Japanese merchant laboured under two signal disqualifications for engaging in it successfully,—inexperience almost absolute, and a traditional habit of relying on official tutelage in commercial affairs. He was accustomed to exchange his staple commodities at prices fixed by law; he did not enjoy the privilege of discriminating between the intrinsic values of the coins issuing from the mint, but was required to render blind deference to their supercriptions; his commercial conscience had been



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blunted by repeated evidences of the Government's financial unscrupulousness; tradition and the inflexible rules of caste taught him to place trade at the lowest point in the scale of human occupations, and he lived in an essentially military age when the business type was out of touch with its surroundings and had not yet attained any appreciable development. Observing these antecedents, the historian is confronted by an unexpected consequence. He finds that, from the very outset, Japanese national enterprise turned quickly into the paths of foreign commerce, and that the people exhibited a marked faculty for engaging with vigour and success in routes of peaceful trade where countries like Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England were then supposed to enjoy a monopoly. Between the coming of the Portuguese in 1542, and the closing of Japan to the outer world in 1636, the Japanese established commercial relations, and inaugurated a trade of more or less volume, with no less than twenty foreign markets. The reputation that the island empire subsequently acquired owing to more than two centuries of semi-seclusion has hidden these facts from general observation, but they are none the less historical. Two things present themselves clearly to view: first, that there was originally no evidence whatever of a disposition to impose restrictions on the comings and goings of Western traders; secondly, that the benefits of commerce,

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as exemplified by the doings of those traders, impelled Japan to immediate and enthusiastic imitation. Portuguese ships were made free to visit any part of the realm. To the Dutch and the English, when they came in the early years of the seventeenth century, similar freedom of commerce was granted. They received written authorisation, over the vermilion stamp of the Tokugawa *Shōgun* to "conduct trade without molestation in any port or at any place in Japan." There was no imposition of onerous taxes or duties, and though presents had to be offered to local officials and to the central government, their total value never exceeded five per cent of the nominal cost of the cargo on account of which they were made. Yet, eighty-seven years after this auspicious inauguration of foreign intercourse, Japan made an almost complete reversal of her national policy, adopted an exclusive attitude, substituted distrust and aversion for the confidence and amity of her previous mood, and asserted her right of isolation with fierce and unrelenting imperiousness. What had happened to produce this remarkable metamorphosis?

Looking back to the commencements of Japan's foreign intercourse, it is seen that close upon the footsteps of the pioneers of trade followed the pioneers of Christianity. They too were hospitably received. It is true that the sequel of their propagandism shows Japan re-

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sorting to the fires of persecution and the cross of the martyr with all the merciless vehemence of contemporary Europe, and that the story of their doings was thus projected upon the pages of history in shocking outlines. But the mood ultimately educated by the conduct of the Christian propagandists differed widely from the mood with which they were originally welcomed. That fact cannot be too emphatically asserted. If these Portuguese and Spanish apostles of the Nazarene, together with their Japanese disciples, fell victims at the last to the wrath of the nation whose heart they had come to win, the cause is to be sought in their own faults and in the intrigues of their foreign rivals rather than in the prejudice or bigotry of the Japanese. They taught to Japan the intolerance which she subsequently displayed towards themselves, and they provoked its display by their own imprudence.

The historical bases of these propositions are easily traced. During the interval of two hundred and sixty-one years — 1281 to 1542 A. D. — that separated the great Mongol invasion of Japan from the opening of intercourse between the latter and Europe, the spirit of lawless adventure prevalent throughout the Occident found its counterpart in the conduct of the Japanese. It might be supposed that their lust for fighting would have been amply sated by the perpetual domestic combats that kept their own country in a ferment from shore to shore. But although



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rich prizes fell to the share of the leaders in these internecine struggles, the ordinary *samurai* gained little by them. His pay was scanty, his prospect of promotion limited, and it may well be that he sometimes turned with loathing from the constant necessity of bathing his hands in the blood of his own countrymen. At all events, piracy became a favourite occupation. The Japanese appear to have regarded the littoral provinces of their neighbours as fair fields for raid and foray. Some historians suggest that the fiercely aggressive temper of the time was kindled, or, at any rate, fanned into active flame, by the Mongol assaults which the great Khan made upon Japan. But the course of events is not consistent with that theory. The defeat of Kublai's armadas, on the contrary, was succeeded by an interval of comparative quiescence, partly, no doubt, because the Japanese appreciated the might of which such formidable efforts were an evidence, and partly because their sea-going capacities still remained comparatively undeveloped. But from the middle of the fourteenth century it became a species of military pastime in Japan to fit out a little fleet of war-boats and make a descent upon the coasts of Korea or of China. The annals of the sufferers, naturally more credible in some respects than those of the aggressors, show that what the Norsemen were to Europe in early ages, and the English to Spanish America in times contemporary with those now under consideration, the



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Japanese were to China. They made descents upon the Shantung Promontory, — the same place where their posterity, in modern days, were destined to annihilate China's naval forces at Weihaiwei, — and carried their raids far inland, looting and destroying villages and towns, and then marching back leisurely to the coast, where they shipped their booty and sailed away when the wind suited. They repeated these outrages, year after year, on an increasing scale, until the provinces of Fuhkien, Chekiang, Kiangsu, and Shantung — in other words, littoral regions extending over three degrees of latitude — were almost wholly overrun by the fierce freebooters. It is related in Chinese history that the commonest topics of conversation in this unhappy era were the descents of the Japanese on the dominions of the Middle Kingdom, the vessels taken by them, the towns pillaged and sacked, the provinces ravaged. They are spoken of as "sovereigns of the sea," and although forty-nine fortresses were erected by the much harassed Chinese people along the eastern coasts, and although one man out of every four of the sea-board population was enrolled in a coast-guard army, the raiders made nothing of such obstacles. The immemorial iteration of Chinese military experiences was again exemplified. Defeated generals laid accusations of incapacity and treachery at each other's doors, and being all alike denounced by the censors, the best were recalled and punished and the worst left in command.

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The Japanese pirates, it should be remembered, were not backed by any reserve of national force; they were private marauders, mere soldiers of fortune, without even the open countenance or support of a feudal chieftain, though undoubtedly their enterprises were often undertaken in the secret interests of some local magnate. It stands to China's lasting humiliation that she was at last compelled to treat the freebooters as a national enemy, and to move a large army against them. There is, indeed, an element of comicality in the situation as it existed at the time of which we write, — China always perched upon a pedestal of ineffable loftiness, addressing her neighbours in forms of speech rigidly adapted to the height at which she supposed herself to stand above them, and solemnly registering the visits of their ambassadors as tribute-bearing missions; Japan lightly contemptuous of such pretensions, thrusting the magnificent Empire's envoys into prison and keeping them there for months on some transparently petty pretext, crossing her neighbour's borders whenever and wherever she pleased, and carrying away everything of interest or of value that came under her hand, yet never hesitating to send openly and courteously for a Buddhist *sutra*, a *céladon* vase, or a brocade altar-cloth, if a desire for such objects suggested itself.

Korea underwent at Japan's hands experiences only a degree less harassing than those suffered by China, but failed altogether to find

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a remedy. Her feeble and ill-judged measures of retaliation served merely to provoke fresh aggression.

The interest of this chapter of Japanese history consists not merely in the materials that it furnishes for estimating the quality of Japanese enterprise and of Japanese fighting capacity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but also in the indications that it contains of the country's attitude towards foreign commerce and foreign intercourse at that epoch; that is to say, commerce and intercourse with China and Korea, for the time here considered was prior to the coming of Europeans. Foreign commerce was regarded, not as a factor of national wealth, but as a means of enriching a few privileged individuals. Its profits were, for the most part, confined to two great families, the Ouchi in the case of China, and the So in the case of Korea, and restrictions were imposed upon its dimensions solely for the purpose of keeping it within reach of the prescribed control. Speaking generally, it may be said that the patronage of one feudal chief or court noble involved the opposition, or aroused the jealousy, of some other, and not until the unification of the nation in modern times created a common interest in promoting factors of prosperity, did foreign commerce cease to be hampered by personal rivalries and political ambitions. As for foreign intercourse, its conveniences alone were considered, the obligations



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that it imposed being practically neglected. Japan drew freely upon China and Korea for whatever contributions they could make to her literary, religious, and artistic equipments, but at the same time she allowed her subjects to pursue toward both countries a course of lawless violence that must have speedily involved her in war had either the Koreans or the Chinese seen any hope of engaging her successfully. There was no hope, however. She beat back their armadas; she carried fire and sword into their territories without even the semblance of a national effort; she imprisoned their envoys; she showed her total fearlessness of them in a hundred ways. But she never opposed the comings and goings of their peoples to and from her own territories. There was no isolation on her side.

Such was the state of affairs when (1542) the first Europeans came to Japan.

Christianity and foreign commerce presented themselves, hand in hand, and there is no doubt that the marked success which the former achieved at first was due, in large part, to the favour with which the latter was regarded as a means of furnishing wealth and novel weapons of war to the feudal chieftains in their combats and armed rivalries. The alien creed was, in fact, drawn from the outset into the vortex of Japanese politics, and by an evil chance its early patrons, though powerful at the moment, were destined soon to be stripped of their possessions and their



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influence. But its sun had risen high above the horizon before the first clouds made their appearance. In thirty years two hundred thousand converts were won, three monasteries, a college, a university, and upwards of fifty churches were built, and it seemed as though the thirty-six provinces of which Japan then consisted might soon be included in the pale of Christendom. Such results, when compared with the achievements of missionaries in the present times, suggest, at first sight, either that the methods of mediæval propagandism were superior to those of modern, or that some special receptivity for religious truth existed among the Japanese of the sixteenth century. But the fact is that the imported faith profited largely by two adventitious aids, its commercial associations and the marked disfavour into which Buddhism happened to have fallen at that epoch. The latter point, already briefly touched on in a previous chapter, deserves elaboration.

At the moment when the question of the State's attitude towards Christianity had to be answered, Oda Nobunaga, the first of the great triumvirate who finally rescued Japan from internecine strife, was approaching the zenith of his power in the central and northern districts. He aimed at restoring the administrative authority of the Emperor and putting an end to the sanguinary struggles carried on by the feudal chiefs throughout the Empire. His splendid successes soon placed him in a position to decide whether

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the foreign creed, already counting many disciples in the south, should be sanctioned or proscribed in the capital. Historians delight to put wise epigrams into the mouths of illustrious men. It is related of Nobunaga that he dismissed the Christian problem by curtly observing that, since Japan already possessed a dozen different sects of religion, he saw no reason why she should not have a thirteenth. He may have couched his decision in that language, but as to the real motives of the decision there cannot be much doubt. He regarded the Buddhists as enemies of the State. During nearly seven centuries the arrogant pretensions of the priests had grown more and more defiant of official control. From an early era it had been the custom to entrust to them the care of mortuary tablets and the guardianship of tombs. Immense importance naturally attached to the discharge of such functions in a country where ancestral worship informed all religion. Besides, it has already been shown that the representatives of the Indian creed were closely associated with the progress of moral enlightenment and material prosperity, and that they figured prominently in maintaining relations with Japan's continental neighbours. If to that record the fact be added that, from the close of the seventh century, Buddhism had been employed to some extent by Japanese statesmen as an aid to the unification of the nation, and, at a later time, by Japanese sovereigns in their strug-

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gles against usurping clans, it is possible to appreciate the important position held by it in every sphere of the people's life. Rich gifts and extensive tracts of land were bestowed upon the temples, now by a superstitious sovereign or crafty statesman; now by some powerful feudal noble who desired to associate heaven with the prosecution of his ambitious designs, and in any national crisis, such as the Tartar and Mongol invasions, the coffers of the State were emptied into the sacred treasure-chests. Prominent among the ancient superstitions of Japan was a belief that all evil influences and their abode in the northeast, the Demons' Gate (*Kimon*). Due northeast of the Imperial Palace in Kyōtō stood the mountain of Hiyei, and there, to guard the Court against demoniacal approaches, Dengyo, a celebrated Buddhist priest of the ninth century, founded a monastery which by and by grew to be a town of three thousand buildings, inhabited by from thirty to forty thousand monks, the great majority of whom could wield a halberd much better than they could intone a litany. The example set at Hiyei-no-yama — or Hiyei-zan, as the place is now called — was soon followed by other congregations of religionists, and the powerful bands of tonsured soldiers (*Sōhei*) thus organised became one of the most turbulent and unmanageable elements in the State. Theological questions troubled them little. They interested themselves much more vividly in the fortunes of the



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nobles or the sovereigns from whom they derived their own wealth, and since they soon learned to employ the shrewd device of combining esoteric and exoteric influences by carrying the holy car of Buddha in their armed processions, their enmity became as formidable as their alliance was valuable. Nothing bears stronger testimony to the religious instincts of the Japanese than the fact that, despite the violent incursions perpetually made by the monks into the domain of politics, from the time of Shirakawa's reign (1073-1087) down to the second half of the sixteenth century, the monasteries almost invariably escaped the destruction that overtook the strongholds of nobles whose cause they espoused. But Nobunaga measured out ruthless justice to these truculent religionists. A soldier before everything, he had no compassion for any obstacle that barred his military path. If he did not shrink from putting his own brother and his wife's father to the sword, neither did he hesitate to deluge a monastery with blood before he reduced it to ashes, or to set up, with imperious inconstancy, his own effigy among the images of the gods whose fanes he had annihilated. Some of the most powerful Buddhist associations had sided with his political enemies, and he determined not only to root them out, but also to destroy permanently their mischievous potentialities.

It was at the moment when this fury against the Buddhist priests had reached destructive heat, that



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the Jesuit fathers applied to Nobunaga for a charter of propagandism, and received from him an extensive grant of land in Kyōtō, a yearly allowance of money and authority to take up their residence in the capital. The Owari chieftain does not seem to have entertained any respect for Christianity. Religion, in whatsoever guise, occupied an insignificant space on his moral horizon. His unique motive was to set up an opponent to the doctrine that had begotten such troublesome factors in the realm. Christianity was nothing to him for its own sake. As a rival of Buddhism it might be much.

From using the foreign faith for political purposes to suspecting it of political designs the interval was short, and Nobunaga's intelligence soon traversed it. His scrutiny of the Jesuits' methods—their profuse almsgiving, their tendance of the sick, their exercise of unprecedented medical skill—convinced him that they aimed at something more than saving men's souls, and he had begun to revolve plans for their expulsion when death overtook him at the hand of a traitor. But even the brief favour extended by him to Christianity had been disapproved by the man who avenged his fate and succeeded to his power, Hideyoshi, the *Taikō*.

The annals of the Jesuits ascribe to the meanest and paltriest motives the animosity that the *Taikō* ultimately displayed towards their faith. It is impossible to accept their evidently preju-

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diced verdict. The *Taikō*, like all Japanese of his era, was without any experience of international intercourse, but his statecraft rose to the height of genius. It is inconceivable that a man of such profound insight could fail to detect the political import of the credentials from secular authorities with which the Jesuit fathers came provided, or to appreciate the material character that the conquests of the Cross might be made to assume. He had learned by heart every lesson that the annals of his own country could teach. He knew how Buddhism, originally an instrument in the hands of Japanese statesmen, had ultimately defied their authority, raised itself even above the Imperial Court, and developed military strength with which the most powerful feudal nobles hesitated to cross swords. The story of the very sect against which the animosity of his leader and patron, Oda Nobunaga, burned most relentlessly, showed what even a creed of gentle tenets and refining influences like Buddhism might become in the hands of militant propagandists. He perceived that Christianity evinced nothing of the eclecticism or adaptability which had prevented a collision between Buddhism and the ancestral cult of the Japanese. He saw that the Jesuit fathers spurned all compromise; that the disciple of every other faith was to them an infidel, a pagan, a child of the devil; that their fierce zeal, heated white in fires of which no reflection had yet been cast on the

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horizon of Japan, drove them from the outset to excesses of intolerance presaging a national catastrophe as soon as Buddhism found itself forced to fight for its life. The *Taikō* owed much of his remarkable success to a fine sense of proportion. He possessed the gift of measuring with precision the strength of offence or defence that a given combination of men or things would develop under certain contingencies. Nothing is more improbable than that he underestimated the immense potentialities for resistance, or, if need be, for aggressive destructiveness, possessed by Japanese Buddhism in his time; an *imperium in imperio*, dowered with vast stores of wealth, wielding a military organisation which, were its various parts combined against a common foe, would hold the whole realm at its mercy, and historically capable of efforts so strong even for the petty purposes of a sectarian squabble that their supreme exercise in a life-and-death struggle with Christianity could not be contemplated without the gravest misgivings. Vaguely, perhaps, but still in outlines sufficiently distinct to suggest a lurid picture, these eventualities must have presented themselves to his strong intelligence, and as the cries of dying priests and the crash of falling temples reached his ears from Kiushiu where the Christian propagandists were harrying their opponents with the faggot and the sword, he may well have begun to appreciate the dimensions of the impending catastrophe.

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He did not, however, immediately take steps to evince his disapproval of militant Christianity, nor when the time seemed ripe for proscribing it did he proceed to extremities. The crucifixion spear does not appear to have suggested itself to him as a prudent weapon for combating moral convictions. It is true that in the heat of his first anti-Christian demonstration he caused two men to be executed, and it is also true that he deprived a Christian noble of his fief by way of penalty for the constancy of his faith. But, for the rest, he remained content with the razing of a few chapels, and with a public declaration that he would not tolerate, on the part of Christian propagandists, any recourse to the violent methods of which the country had garnered such painful experiences in the case of the Buddhist *Sōhei*, and of which the Christians had already shown themselves ready employers. There is nothing to indicate that, had Christianity thenceforth relied solely on legitimate weapons, the pulpit, education, and example, paying due respect to the laws of the land and extending to others the toleration that it claimed for itself—there is nothing to indicate that it might not have retained, strengthened, and extended the footing it had gained in Japan, and that the Japanese might not then have finally entered the arena of international intercourse and competition, instead of isolating themselves for nearly three centuries until they had been almost



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hopelessly distanced in the race of material civilisation.

But a new influence now made itself felt. The Jesuits were assailed by an enemy from within the fold. Hitherto they had been without sectarian rivals in Japan. Their precedence in the field was regarded as constituting a title to its monopoly, and a Papal Bull had assigned the Far-Eastern islands as their special diocese. Now, however, the Spaniards took steps to dispute their ascendancy by sending an envoy from the Philippines to complain of some alleged illegality on the part of Portuguese merchants. In the envoy's train came a number of Franciscans, and when the Jesuits remonstrated, and called attention to the Papal Bull, the Franciscans gave an ingenuous reply. They had observed the Bull, they said, since they had not come as religionists but as members of an ambassador's suite, and having thus by lawful means surmounted the difficulty of getting to Japan, there was no longer any just impediment to their preaching there. Very soon they made their presence felt in a pernicious manner. Hitherto the Japanese had been left to draw their own conclusions as to the political contingencies of Christian propagandism. Thenceforth they received ample material for suspicion from the Portuguese and the Spaniards themselves, for each roundly accused the other of aggressive designs against Japan's integrity. Hideyoshi

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strictly interdicted any attempt at religious propagandism on the part of the Franciscans, whose presence in the capital he had sanctioned in an ambassadorial capacity only. The Franciscans paid not the smallest heed to his veto. Possibly they justified their disobedience by some casuistry as convincing as their retort to the Jesuits. If so, they failed to make the point clear to Hideyoshi. He ordered their arrest, and sent them, with three Jesuit fathers and seventeen — some records say twenty-four — native Christians to Nagasaki, where they were executed. The scene was transferred to canvas by a nameless European artist of great ability. Crucifixion was the method of execution, but not crucifixion as practised in the Occident. The victims were tied to a cross and pierced from left and right simultaneously by sharp spears inserted below the ribs and thrust diagonally towards the shoulders. Death was generally instantaneous, but sometimes the stabs had to be repeated. The painting is true in every detail. It portrays, without exaggerating, the racial types of the victims and their slayers, the vinous swagger of the semi-brutalised executioner, the ecstatic calm of the Fathers, and the awful perspective of the long line of crosses with their bleeding burdens.

This was Hideyoshi's protest, first, against the risk of Japan's becoming a battle-field for rival creeds from abroad ; secondly, against the defiant attitude assumed by the strangers towards secular

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authority, and thirdly, against the political intrigues of which the Christians accused themselves and of which he had long suspected them. It is worth while to observe these facts carefully, for they lie at the root of all Japan's foreign intercourse.

Iyeyasu, the Tokugawa chieftain, who succeeded to the work of domestic pacification already carried within sight of completion by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, did not at first give any clear indication of the course that he intended to pursue towards the Padres and their following. But there can be no doubt that the Christian problem had attracted his keen attention long before the full control of administrative affairs came into his hands (1600 A. D.). No Japanese statesman could afford to ignore a question which was producing not only widespread disturbance, but also a startling change in the relations between the classes. In all times, one of the results of Roman Catholic propagandism in Oriental countries has been to remove the converts beyond the unchallenged control of the civil authorities and to elevate their spiritual guides to the rank of secular protectors. The members of the Christian community learn to believe that their conversion differentiates them from the mass of their unregenerate nationals, and opens to them a tribunal of appeal against any exaction or injustice to which the latter may be exposed. Modern diplomatists have often

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been required to consider that outcome of missionary enterprise in China. A cognate problem forced itself on the attention of Japanese statesmen from a very early period. The Emperor Shirakawa (1073-1087), who, at the zenith of his power, complained that only three things in his realm defied his authority, — the chances of the dice, the waters of the Kamo River, and the priests of Buddha, — was ultimately obliged to invoke the assistance of the military nobles against the contumacious proceedings of the Buddhist prelates, thus inaugurating between the followers of the sword and the disciples of the *sutras* an era of feuds which culminated in the fierce exterminations resorted to by Oda Nobunaga. From the outset a similar spirit of independence was educated by Christian propagandism in Japan. It is characteristic of human nature that men conspicuously prone to encroach upon the sphere of another's rights are proportionately conservative of their own. The Roman Catholic priest's stout defiance of pagan interference in the foreign fields of his labour was but another form of the zeal that impelled him to protect orthodoxy with the faggot and the rack in Europe. Iyeyasu mounted the administrative throne at a time when these things forced themselves upon political attention. He had seen Franciscan monks trample upon the veto of the *Taikō* within the very shadow of the latter's castle. He had seen Christians in Nagasaki successfully ignore the



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orders of the men appointed by the *Taikō* to restrain them. He had seen the Padres resume their preaching almost immediately after the issue of a prohibitory edict. He had seen the unprecedented spectacle of *heimin* (commoners) accepting from the alien creed a commission to oppose *samurai* authority. He had seen the persecuting intolerance of the foreign faith constitute a new menace to the tranquillity which it was his hope, and seemingly his mission, to restore to his tired countrymen. It can scarcely be doubted, therefore, that Iyeyasu was opposed to Christianity from the first. Besides, whether from policy or conviction, he was himself a devotee of Buddhism. He carried in his bosom an image of Amida, and in seventy-three battles he had donned no armour, avowedly trusting solely to the protection of the god he worshipped. The quality of this great leader's piety is not here a matter of concern. He may have been prompted mainly by a desire to win to his cause influences which, when opposed, had shown themselves strong and mischievous. But that a man who encouraged his followers to regard him as an incarnation of one of Yakushi's Arhats, and professed to consider a miniature effigy of Kuro Honzon better protection than cuirass or hauberk against sword or arrow, should ever have seriously entertained the idea of countenancing Christianity, is an unreasonable supposition. On the other hand, conciliation and tolerance were essential factors in

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the administration of Iyeyasu. He never resorted to violence where his end seemed capable of being compassed by tact. Thus, although, in the year 1600, he proclaimed his policy by means of an edict banishing Christian propagandists, as the *Taikō* had done in 1587, like the *Taikō* he took no conclusive steps to enforce the order. For a moment, indeed, it seemed as though the edict would be followed by drastic measures. Shortly after its issue the Christian places of worship in Kyōtō were destroyed and several followers of the faith met their death. But active persecution ceased there, so far as the central authorities were concerned.

In the provinces, however, the Christians had to endure suffering. They reaped as they had sown. The detailed story need not be told. It bears further testimony to the fact that the fortunes of the Western creed in each district depended on the prejudice or caprice of the feudal chief governing there, and were consequently exposed to many of the intrigues, jealousies, and ambitions which disfigured the era. Iyeyasu made no attempt to interfere between the victims and their local persecutors. He had announced his disapproval of Christianity and he waited on the course of events.

Meanwhile, despite local opposition and the nominal ban of the central Government, the foreign creed constantly gained. In the year 1605 the number of converts was estimated

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at six hundred thousand, and from Sendai in the north to Kagoshima in the south its propagandists preached openly and its adherents worshipped in their own churches. The time had come to choose between final toleration or resolute extirpation.

Iyeyasu chose the latter. On January the twenty-seventh, 1614, he issued a proclamation ordering the banishment of the propagandists and leaders of Christianity, the destruction of their churches, and the compulsory recantation of their doctrines. "The Christians," his edict said, "have come to Japan not only to carry on commerce with their ships, but also to propagate an evil creed and subvert the true doctrine, to the end that they may effect a change of government in the country and thus usurp possession of it. This seed will produce a harvest of unhappiness. It must be eradicated." That Iyeyasu was fully persuaded of the truth of these words, there can be little question. It only remains to inquire the proximate causes by which he was led to exchange his previous attitude of negative disapproval for one of positive extermination.

Several reasons present themselves. The first is the issue of a Bull, in 1608, granting to all orders of Christianity free access to Japan. From the point of view of Rome the step was natural. Japan had hitherto been a papally forbidden land to all save the Jesuits. Paul the Fifth simply

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rescinded the veto. But from the point of view of Iyeyasu the incident assumed a very different aspect. The *Taikō* had issued an interdict ordering the withdrawal of all Christian propagandists from Japan. The *Shōgun* had repeated the interdict. The Pope of Rome ignored both vetoes and authoritatively threw Japan open to Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, anybody and everybody wearing a cowl or carrying a Testament.

The second reason is that Iyeyasu found in Christianity a formidable obstacle to the realisation of his own political projects. After the battle of Sekigahara there remained only one source of possible peril to the peace which it was the Tokugawa leader's highest ambition to secure for his country. That source was Hideyori, the *Taikō's* son. He and his supporters intrigued to effect the overthrow of the Tokugawa, and the Jesuit Fathers threw in their lot with them, as did also a multitude of Christians. The castle at Osaka, with its stupendous battlements and almost impregnable defences, became a resort for persecuted or discontented Christians from all parts of the Empire. The Padres cannot be reproached for the part they chose at that crisis. Scarcely a faint hope remained that their faith would ever be sanctioned by the Tokugawa, whereas, with the *Taikō's* son at the head of the administration and owing his elevation in a large degree to Christian aid, there might have dawned for the Fathers and their flock an era not merely of State



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tolerance but also of official patronage. Then, indeed, events might have justified the premature pœan of the Dillingen chronicler, that Japan had been "won over and incorporated into the true fold of the Christian Church." Such a prize was worth playing for at heavy risks. The Padres played for it and failed. Iyeyasu's sentence of banishment and extermination overtook them in 1614, and in the following year Osaka Castle was given to the flames after a struggle that is said to have cost a hundred thousand lives.

Yet another reason for the Tokugawa chief's recourse to drastic measures must be noted. The Dutch, concluding a commercial convention with Japan in 1610, naturally sought to oust the Portuguese from the monopoly that they held of Japanese trade, and to that end they roundly accused both Portuguese and Spaniards of prostituting Christian propagandism to political intrigue, and of concealing designs against Japan's integrity under the cloak of her religious regeneration. The English, who soon afterwards gained access to Japan's markets, adopted the tactics of the Dutch. It was easy to show from contemporary history that such accusations rested on bases at least highly plausible. Nobunaga had more than suspected something of the kind thirty years before either Dutch or English preferred the accusation; the *Taikō* had shared the suspicion, and Iyeyasu, with a wider range of experience to guide him, would probably have passed from sus-

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picion to certainty even without the testimony of Hollanders or British. A good deal has been urged in modern times by way of apology for the conduct of the English and the Dutch. Some have even denied the charge on behalf of one, or the other, or both. There is no occasion for either repudiation or extenuation. Considering the relations between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, between England and Spain, and between Holland and Portugal at that era, and recalling the canons of commercial combats and the rules of the religious lists at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it becomes evident that things fell out in Japan exactly as might have been predicated.

The facts here set down compel an impartial historian to admit that what Japan did in 1614, most European States would have done under the same circumstances at the same epoch. An impartial historian will probably go a great deal farther. He will conclude that the measures of expulsion and eradication adopted by Japan in 1614 would have been adopted forty or fifty years earlier by any European State under pressure of the same incentives. No European State would have tolerated for a moment the things that were perpetrated in the name of Christianity between 1560 and 1576 in Nagasaki and Bungo, and between 1597 and 1600 in Higo. No European State would have suffered the propagandists of a foreign faith to settle within its borders and excite a section of its

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population to make a holocaust of the national places of worship, and to stone, slaughter, and banish their priests. If Japan endured these outrages for a time, it was because her strength of national self-assertion was paralysed by division. The central administration had no power to prescribe a uniform policy to the multitude of irresponsible and semi-independent principalities into which the country was divided, and in the rival ambitions of the various territorial magnates whose cause the missionary promoted with arms and gold, he found temporary safety and patronage. The integration of the Empire, first under Hideyoshi, subsequently and more completely under Iyeyasu, was the signal for recourse to measures which, were they embodied in a chapter of contemporary Occidental history, would not have seemed either incongruous or abnormal.

There is no occasion to describe in detail the struggle that ensued between religious fanaticism and the exterminating zeal of officials who believed themselves to be obeying the highest instincts of patriotic statecraft. The story has already occupied many pens. Terrible things were done, things worthy of Torquemada and Ximenes, and the long tragedy culminated in a rebellion which involved the death of from thirty to forty thousand Christians and the final expulsion of the Portuguese from Japan. This rebellion — celebrated in history as the “Shimabara Revolt” — was brought to a close in the spring



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of 1638. Shortly before its outbreak an edict of the most drastic nature was promulgated. It declared that any Japanese subject attempting to go abroad, or any Japanese subject already abroad who attempted to return home, should be executed; it directed that all foreigners professing Christianity should be imprisoned at Omura; it forbade Eurasian children to reside in Japan, and it decreed banishment for any persons adopting an Eurasian child and severe punishment for their relatives. Four years later, the Dutch were required to confine themselves to Deshima. They had succeeded in effectually prejudicing the Japanese against the Portuguese and the Spaniards, but they had not succeeded in preserving any large measure of respect for themselves.

These cruel and illiberal measures crowned Japan's policy of restriction and isolation,—a policy which may be said to have commenced on a radical scale with the proclamation of Iyeyasu in 1614, and to have culminated in the imprisonment of the Dutch at Deshima in 1641 by his grandson, Iyeyasu, the third Tokugawa *Shōgun*. In that interval another step, wholly destructive of maritime enterprise, was taken by the same Iyeyasu. It has already been alluded to. He ordered that all vessels of sea-going capacity should be destroyed, and that no craft should thenceforth be built of sufficient size to venture beyond home waters.

A more complete metamorphosis of a nation's





NAKAJIMA, NAGASAKI.



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policy could scarcely be conceived. In 1541 we find the Japanese celebrated, or notorious, throughout the whole of the Far East for exploits abroad; we find them known as the "Kings of the Sea;" we find them welcoming foreigners with cordiality and opposing no obstacles to foreign commerce or even to the propagandism of foreign creeds; we find them so quick to recognise the benefits of trade and so apt to pursue them that, in the space of a few years, they establish commercial relations with no less than twenty over-sea markets; we find them authorising the Portuguese and the English to trade at every port in the Empire; we find, in short, all the elements requisite for a career of commercial enterprise, ocean-going adventure and international liberality. In 1641 everything is reversed. Trade is interdicted to all Western people except the Dutch, and they are confined to a little island, two hundred yards in length by eighty yards in width. The least symptom of predilection for an alien creed is punished with awful rigour. Any attempt to leave the limits of the realm involves decapitation. Not a ship large enough to pass beyond the shadow of the coast may be built.

However unwelcome the admission, it is apparent that for all these changes Christianity was responsible. The policy of seclusion adopted by Japan in the early part of the seventeenth century and resolutely pursued until the middle of the nineteenth, was anti-Christian, not anti-foreign.

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The fact cannot be too clearly recognised. It is the chief lesson taught by the events outlined above. Throughout the whole of that period of isolation, Occidentals were not known to the Japanese by any of the terms now in common use, — as *gwaikoku-jin*, *seiyo-jin*, or *i-jin*, which embody the simple meaning, foreigner, or Western, or alien: they were popularly called *bateren* (padre). Thus completely had foreign intercourse and Christian propagandism become identified in the eyes of the people. And when it is remembered that “foreign intercourse” associated with Christianity had come to be synonymous in Japanese ears with foreign aggression, with the subversal of the Mikado’s sacred dynasty, and with the loss of the independence of the Country of the Gods, there is no difficulty in understanding the attitude of the nation’s mind towards this question. In these considerations, too, is found a reason for the lack of any element of national ambition in the ultimate policy of Iyeyasu, and from first to last in the policy of his greatest successor, Iyemitsu.



## Chapter IV

### MIDDLE PERIOD OF THE TOKUGAWA

NOTHING is more remarkable in the history of the Tokugawa epoch than the absence of anything like organised rebellion for many generations. Nevertheless at an early period of the epoch there appeared upon the stage a turbulent figure which remained more or less in evidence until modern days. This was the *rōnin*, or "wave-man," an epithet applied to *samurai* who, believing themselves charged with a mission to mend the times, refrained from joining the service of any fief, and wandered about, ready to take a part in all adventures that showed a colouring of sentiment. Some of them, originally vassals of feudal houses upon whose ruins the Tokugawa had risen to power, were only obeying the dictates of loyalty when they refused to bow to the Yedo rule. Some had no grievance except their own inability to conquer fortune; and many, swayed by the pure spirit of knight-errantry, passed from place to place for the sole purpose of measuring swords

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with fencers of repute wherever such might be found. When, in the fourth generation of the Tokugawa, the office of *Shōgun* fell to a boy of eleven, a number of these "wave-men" imagined that the time had come for a grand *coup*. They plotted to set Yedo on fire and to attack the castle in the confusion. Happily detection preceded the act. The leaders died by their own hands or under the sword of the executioner, and for a long era no repetition of such enterprises disturbed the public peace. The seventeenth-century *rōnin* are not to be regarded, however, as the outcome of a transient mood of political unrest. They represented a conviction apparently inherent in the Japanese mind, that every man possesses a natural right to assert his opinion in whatever manner he chooses, provided that he accepts the full consequences of his choice. That is the most emphatic form assumed by Japanese individualism. There is no element of license in the theory: a morally justifiable motive must always exist. But that condition satisfied, a man may demonstrate the sincerity and earnestness of his views by sacrificing his own life or that of another. The motive warrants the method — which may be called the Japanese version of the end justifies the means.

The era (1661–1680) of this fourth Tokugawa *Shōgun*, Iyetsuna, was remarkable for other things as well as for the lawlessness of the "wave-men." From that time the Tokugawa began to fare as

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all great families of previous ages had fared: the substance of administrative power passed into the hands of a Minister, its shadow alone remaining to the *Shōgun*. Sakai Takakiyo was the chief author of this change. Secluded from contact with the outer world, the *Shōgun*, a man of weak intellect, saw and heard only through the eyes and ears of the ladies of his household. Takakiyo caused an order to be issued forbidding all access to the Court ladies except by ministerial permit. Thenceforth the *Shōgun* became practically deaf and dumb. He knew nothing of the novel channels into which public opinion was beginning to drift, of the calamities that marked the era, or of the irreverence that his officials displayed towards the Throne. For Yedo having been devastated by conflagrations and the nation afflicted by famine, the ministers of the Shogunate, declaring that these misfortunes were attributable to the Emperor's unworthiness, caused him to abdicate in favour of the heir apparent. They thus practised the democratic principles laid down by Mencius, and not a voice of protest was raised, the feudatories being completely overawed by the might of the *Shōgun*, and the Court nobles silenced by the munificence of the Yedo administration. The one authoritative act of his life was done by Iyetsuna in the hour of death. Hotta Masatoshi, a loyal minister, went secretly to his side and warned him that a scheme was on foot to transfer the office of *Shōgun* to an Imperial Prince. Ta-

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kakiyo had conceived this plot, borrowing a model from the policy of the *Hōjō* in Kamakura. His ambition was to secure for himself and his descendants the position of Vicegerent. But the insignia of the Shogunate — a Masamune sword and a Kunimitsu dagger — were handed by the dying *Shōgun* at midnight to Hotta Masatoshi, and when morning broke the conspirators found the dead man's office occupied by his brother, Tsunayoshi.

This is a particularly interesting epoch of Japan's history. It saw the first manifestations of a public opinion destined to culminate in the remarkable radicalism of the nation's nineteenth-century career. The *Shōgun's* ministers, when they placed upon the Emperor's shoulders responsibility for his subjects' suffering, furnished an unwitting proof of the tendency of the time, for it was from the writings of the Chinese philosophers that they borrowed such an idea. On the other hand, the outrage thus offered to the traditions of imperialism reacted in aid of a revival then commencing, the revival of the *Shintō* cult. Fate, as usual ironical, placed the *Shōgun* (Tsunayoshi) himself in the forefront of this movement, though no great perspicacity should have been needed to show him that a cult based on the divinity of the Emperor was irreconcilable with the Tokugawa's pretensions to administrative supremacy. Perhaps, if his appreciation of *Shintō* had not been prompted



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by a woman,<sup>1</sup> Tsunayoshi might have showed greater political insight. But on the whole it seems juster to conclude that his love of learning overmastered all considerations of expediency, and made him at the close of the seventeenth century an unconscious contributor to influences which in the middle of the nineteenth were to work the downfall of his house.

But the *Shintō* revival was by no means as remarkable as a very pronounced development of political philosophy. At the head of the latter movement stood Hotta Masatoshi, by whose bold and timely action the succession to the Shogunate had been preserved in the Tokugawa family. Masatoshi was the first feudal statesman of Japan to enunciate the doctrine that the people are the basis of a nation, and to put it into practice by encouraging agriculture, protecting farmers against fiscal extortion, and endeavouring to propagate the tenets of a high morality among plebeians as well as *samurai*. Assassination, the common fate of too ardent reformers, terminated his noble career, but did not check the philosophic impulse he represented. It found a still more ardent and radical exponent in Kumazawa Banzan, chief factor of the Okayama fief. This memorable publicist's ethics were that every one in authority had a mission to fulfil, namely, to promote the prosperity and happiness of those over whom he

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 25.

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ruled; that the Emperor was the true head of the nation, the *Shōgun* only his representative; that official attempts to extirpate Christianity were futile, for, if a true creed, it would survive all opposition, and, if false, it would die a natural death; that Buddhism was destined to be a source of national trouble, and that its priests would ultimately become vagrant thieves; and that the *samurai* were virtually bandits, subsisting on unearned salaries and regarding the Emperor as a mere effigy, the people as dirt.

At the time when these theories were proclaimed by Banzan, any profession of Christianity involved terrible punishment; every unit of the nation had to be inscribed on the nominal roll of some Buddhist temple and to be prepared to bear public testimony to anti-Christian sentiment by trampling upon a picture of the Cross; the Buddhists bathed in the favour of the two Courts; the *Shōgun's* power overshadowed the whole Empire, and the *samurai*, of whom Banzan himself was one, had lost nothing of their old prestige nor forfeited anything of their exclusive privileges. Courage to stand in open and flagrant opposition to such conditions savours of fanaticism. But Banzan had nothing of the fanatic. In Okayama where, as chief factor, he wielded large powers, his irrigation works, his conservation of forests, his encouragement of general education, and his suppression of priestly abuses furnished a striking object lesson in the

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practical application of his doctrines. It does not appear that, for a considerable time at any rate, his philosophy provoked any resentment. He enjoyed the full confidence of his feudal chief, and when he followed the latter to Yedo, every second year, the magnates of the *Shōgun's* Court took pleasure in listening to his dissertations. But the *samurai* ultimately roused official prejudice against him, and he had to retire from public life. His theories, however, had taken root. In Mito there arose a school of thinkers who adopted his doctrine as to the proper functions of Imperialism in the administration of State affairs, though they reversed his verdict against Buddhism, their conviction being that the unification of the nation could be best effected by the cooperation of the Buddhist and *Shintō* creeds.

Mito was the baronial capital of the province of Hitachi, which had been given in fief to a younger son of Iyeyasu. Owari and Kishu were assigned to his other sons, and these three families enjoyed the privilege of furnishing an heir to the *Shōgun*, should the latter be without direct issue. Mito, therefore, ought to have been a most unlikely place for the conception and propagation of principles subversive of the *Shōgun's* administrative autocracy. But what happened in Mito at the close of the seventeenth century was a natural result of the trend that Iyeyasu himself had given to public thought by wholesale encour-



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agement of the study of Chinese philosophy. Iyeyasu, as has been shown above, did not possess sufficient knowledge of that philosophy to forecast the effect of its adoption, and similarly his grandson, Kōmon of Mito, swayed by the spirit of pure studentship, discerned nothing of the goal to which the new researches and speculations must lead the literati of his fief. He and they, for the sake of history and without any thought of politics, undertook a retrospect of Japanese annals, and their frank analysis, having been embodied in a book called *Dai-Nihon Shi*, furnished conclusive proof that the Emperor was the prime source of administrative authority, and that its independent exercise by the *Shōgun* must be regarded as a usurpation. They did not attempt to give practical effect to their discoveries. The era was essentially academical. But its galaxy of scholars projected into the future a light which burned with growing force in each succeeding generation, and ultimately burst into flames that consumed feudalism and the Shogunate. No such result suggested itself to the men of the time, however. Not until the lapse of several years had furnished a true perspective did it become possible to perceive that all these currents of unwonted thought — the democracy of Masatoshi, the anti-feudalism of Banzan, the *Shintō* revival of Masayuki and Ansai, the imperialism of Kōmon, the Confucianism of Fujiwara Tōru and Hayashi Doshin — flowed



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towards a common issue, national unification and the restoration of the governing authority to the Emperor.

The first to appreciate the tendency of these philosophic revolutions was Arai Hakuseki, a minister of the sixth *Shōgun*, Iyenobu. He proposed to avert the danger by fortifying the autocracy of the Yedo administration. Following his counsels, the *Shōgun* began to exercise the right of appointing and removing all officials throughout the Empire, and changed the uniforms and titles of his own officials so as to transform the Yedo Court into a replica of that of Kyōtō. He styled himself "King" for the purpose of giving audience to a Korean ambassador, and he made arrangements to receive an Imperial Princess for his consort. These aggressions might have been carried so far as to radically alter the course of Japanese history had not the *Shōgun* died after three years of rule, had not his successor also died before emerging from childhood, and had not the eighth *Shōgun*, Yoshimune, read the signs of the times incorrectly. Arai and his almost equally sagacious coadjutor, Mabe Norifusa, were now dismissed from office, and a strictly conservative policy was inaugurated, lasting for thirty years (1716-1745). Yoshimune and his ministers, though not unconscious of the tide of change that was setting strongly throughout the national life, failed to analyse its causes and endeavoured to stem rather than to

direct it. They observed unprecedented luxury on the part of merchants and farmers and equally conspicuous poverty among the *samurai*, and they imagined that the only way to mend this to them incongruous state of things was to enforce a system of strict economy, and to restrain by sumptuary laws the growing extravagance of the inferior classes.

But the sources of the change were beyond the reach of such methods. During the first one hundred and thirty years of Tokugawa rule the *samurai*, no longer required to lead the frugal life of camp or barracks, and occupying a position midway between the aristocracy and the people, began to live beyond their incomes. They ceased to be able to support retainers, and found difficulty in meeting the pecuniary engagements of every-day existence, so that money acquired new importance in their eyes and they gradually forfeited the respect which their traditional disinterestedness had won for them in the past. At the same time the abuses of feudalism grew more and more conspicuous as the tranquillity of the Empire deepened. A large body of hereditary soldiers, supported from generation to generation at public charges, may find an excuse for existence when war affords an opportunity for their employment, but they become an anomaly and a burden when fighting has passed out of sight and even out of memory. In the middle of the eighteenth century the *samurai* presented

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themselves to the people in the light of useless office-holders, who checked the advancement of men of talent, maintained towards the commoner an attitude of pretension based upon obsolete claims, preserved the continuity of their hereditary emoluments by the device of adoption, clamoured constantly for the creation of new sinecures, and losing, under the stress of poverty, their old independence of character, became suppliants for monetary assistance from men whom they still professed to despise, and even went so far as to sell their family names. On the other hand, the agricultural and commercial classes alike acquired new importance. In the case of the former the change was to some extent factitious. A legal veto existed against either the permanent sale of land or its division where the process resulted in an area of less than two and a half acres or a producing capacity of less than ten *koku* (fifty bushels, approximately). Thus, in order that an estate might be shared with a brother or apportioned among two sons, it must have a superficies of at least five acres, or a producing capacity of one hundred bushels. The result was that, in very many cases, second sons or younger brothers became labourers or tenants, and small land-holders disappearing, a class of "gentleman farmers" came into existence, who lived on their rents and were strangers to physical toil in any shape. Meanwhile the enormous sums disbursed every year in Yedo for the



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maintenance of the great establishments that the feudal chiefs kept there, enriched the merchants and traders so greatly that their scale of living improved, and, like the land-owners, they indulged freely in the extravagances typical of the time,—tobacco smoking, *sake* drinking, vermicelli eating, and sugar consuming. The wealthy city-tradesman and the opulent provincial landlord could not fail to acquire an increasing perception of the gulf between the impecunious *samurai* and themselves. They resented his airs without appreciating his spirit. Excluded from the smallest share in the central administration, they had no sense of national duty, nor did they recognise any public obligation except the payment of taxes, any ethical principle except obedience to parents, or any limit to pleasure-seeking except lack of money. Religious influences were very feeble. Christianity had disappeared, and Buddhism was discredited by the conduct of its priests, who thought more of gratifying the flesh than of saving souls. Houses of ill-fame stood facing the entrances to temples and shrines, and a street in Yedo was frequented solely by the votaries of unnatural vices. The *samurai* themselves were rapidly drawn into this vortex of self-indulgence. Until the final quarter of the seventeenth century the *bushi* of the northeastern districts preserved their martial spirit and made comparatively few incursions into the realm of amatory passion, Osaka being then the chief



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centre of moral intemperance. But the development of the drama which took place at this epoch, quickly familiarised the citizens of Yedo and even its *samurai* with the southern conception of love. Romance and emotionalism took the place of martial ideas and soldierly stoicism. The strict sumptuary laws of the Tokugawa, while ostensibly observed, were in reality evaded by the use of costly linings for coats and the wearing of silk undergarments, and the lower classes, emerging from their old position of penury and degradation, seemed to be seeking in a sudden access of voluptuous license compensation for long centuries of social ostracism. All these changes were contemporaneous with the remarkable intellectual awakening alluded to above, which culminated in the almost fanatical philosophy of Itô Jinsai, a man of singular magnetism and burning eloquence, who for forty years never ceased to travel through the country, preaching the Analects of Confucius and the Teachings of Mencius as the only true moral guides, and winning disciples in every part of the Empire except the almost inaccessible province of Hida and the islands of Sado and Iki. Almost on the same level of intellectual capacity and power of moving his fellows was Ogyu Sorai, who taught that morality could not have a psychological basis, but must be founded on the practical side of natural and human life. The original ideas of these two students and their

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fluent speech created a new epoch. Sōrai took for models the poetry of the *Tang* dynasty and the literature of the *Sui* and the *Kan*, and his methods were assisted by men of letters who had immigrated from China, and whose instruction in the sounds of the ideographs had the effect of imparting unprecedented value to rhetoric. Yet these drafts upon China's wealth of philosophy and erudition served rather as grounds for new departures than as models for exact imitation. The tendency of the era was towards originality in everything. History received treatment that might almost be called scientific at the hands of Arai Hakuseki. The emotions and passions of humanity found a great dramatic portrayer in Chikamatsu Monzayemon. Elegance and conciseness of phraseology had an unsurpassed exponent in Matsuo Bashō, the celebrated composer of impressionist stanzas. Keichiu successfully rehabilitated the memory of Japan's ancient age of classic poetry, the age which produced "The Collection of a Thousand Leaves" (*Manyōshū*). Kitamura Takiyama performed a similar office for the *Heian* epoch. Kada Azuma-marō and his great pupil, Kamo Mabuchi, purged the Japanese language of its exotic elements, and revived popular faith in the divinity of the Throne and in the traditions of Imperial government. In brief, men's thoughts shook off the trammels of convention; material prosperity asserted its superiority over caste distinctions; the nation,

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freed from the long stress of anarchy and warfare, began to project its intelligence along original lines; domestic literature refused to be ignored in favour of foreign; Japanese ideas found inspiration at home instead of seeking it solely in China; the facts of history marshalled themselves in protest against the arbitrary acts of its makers; the commoner ceased to recognise the social gulf between himself and the *samurai*, and symptoms of distaste for the old systems and the old usurpations became more and more apparent.

It was to such a tide of change that the *Shōgun* Yoshimune and his ministers attempted, in the first half of the eighteenth century, to oppose barriers of economic precepts and sumptuary regulations. Arai Hakuseki (1709-1712) had conceived that the only way to save the Shogunate was by a renewed exercise of the despotic forces which had established it, whereas Yoshimune sought safety in retrenchment of expenditures and curtailment of spectacular displays which, though wasteful in his eyes, really conduced to maintain the dignity of the Yedo Court. As between the two policies, that of Arai would probably have served the occasion better, but that of Yoshimune was inspired by clear appreciation of the virtues which alone could make feudalism tolerable. The loyalty and courage of the *samurai*, his noble contempt for money, his simple habits and frugal life had constituted a moral title to the position he occupied. Yoshimune



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and the able officials he employed — among whom was the Solon of Japan, the great judge Ooka Tadasuke — sought to bring about a renaissance of these fine qualities by inculcating frugality and exemplifying it in the practice of the *Shōgun's* Court, on the one hand, and by taking steps to revive the popularity of military exercises, on the other. At the same time, many improvements were effected in the civil and criminal laws; encouragement was given to industry, and, what is even more noteworthy, official vetoes being removed from the study of foreign languages and sciences, the influence of Occidental civilisation began to be felt.

All this was excellent in its way. The nation appreciated it, and history calls the *Kyōhō* era (1716–1736) an “age of reforms” as distinguished from the *Genroku* era (1688–1703), an “age of abuses,” when the fifth *Shōgun* Tsunayoshi, abandoning the paths of learning which had originally held his feet, lapsed into a state of debauchery and vice.

The *Kyōhō* era may almost be considered the prototype of the *Meiji* epoch, in which modern Japan has been so ably led into the routes of progress. A further analogy between the two epochs is established by the fact that, just as the Emperor's administrative power was restored in *Meiji* days, so his prerogatives received unusual recognition in 1745, when Yoshimune, desiring to transfer the *Shōgun's* office to his son, Iyeshige,



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sought the sanction of the Court in Kyōtō. Such an example of submissiveness had no precedent in the annals of the Tokugawa. It stood at the very antipodes of the policy advocated by Arai Hakuseki, and it should probably be regarded as a practical recognition of the doctrines advanced by the Mito school of annalists. Had the Emperor desired to bring about the fall of the Shogunate, an opportunity undoubtedly presented itself at that juncture. But the Imperial Court had learned to rely on the Tokugawa administration, and no idea of a radical change seems to have been entertained. It is impossible not to admire the spirit of Yoshimune's efforts, though their inefficacy must tend to discredit them in the pages of history.

This retrospect arrives now at the second half of the eighteenth century, and one of the facts that presents itself vividly is the disordered state of the Tokugawa finances. The trouble began in the *Genroku* era (1688-1703) when the *Shōgun* Tsunayoshi, while enacting laws of the most stringent character against extravagance of all kinds on the part of the people, set no limit whatever to the indulgence of his own costly caprices, so that the Tokugawa income of some three million *koku* of rice in kind, and 760,000 *riyo* in gold, equivalent in all to about four millions sterling, proved inadequate to defray the outlays of the Yedo Court and the administrative expenditures. The financiers of the time saw no

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better remedy than the issue of debased coins. Hagiwara Shigehide, the minister responsible for the first resort to this device, held singularly drastic views. It was his contention that the copper coins struck at the mint were mere tokens, deriving their value solely from the official stamp they bore, and that they might as well be made of potter's clay as of metal if the former were sufficiently durable. By applying this doctrine tentatively to the gold and silver coins and boldly to the copper, he realised several millions for the replenishment of the treasury. But the evils inseparable from such abuses soon presented themselves: prices of commodities rose, and hoarding became the fashion of the time. Eleven years later (1706) the same method was again employed, and on the accession of Iyenobu to the Shogunate (1709), Shigehide made preparations to issue silver coins containing only twelve per cent of pure metal. Many circumstances combined to augment the economical difficulties of the administration. The state of poverty into which the *samurai* had fallen, owing to causes already stated, rendered them a menace to the public peace. In Yedo alone, at the close of the seventeenth century, 7,690 military men were almost without means of subsistence, and the authorities felt constrained to come to their aid. Natural calamities contributed to the embarrassment. In the year 1703 an earthquake shook down a large portion

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of the colossal walls of the castle moats in Yedo. A conflagration followed, in which thirty-seven thousand lives were lost, and a tidal wave destroyed a hundred thousand people in the districts of Sagami, Kazusa, and Awa. In 1708 the mountain Fuji suddenly burst from quiescence into violent eruption, and vast tracts of country were devastated. It was in the year after this last event that the debauched student and slave of superstition, Tsunayoshi, died, bequeathing to his successor a legacy of fanatical laws and financial confusion; and it was then that the genius and wise statecraft of Arai Hakuseki saved the country from being flooded with another issue of coins possessing scarcely any intrinsic value. Six years sufficed to restore the currency to its old standard of purity and to bring prices to their normal level; but when Arai had to surrender his office in 1716, on the accession of the *Shōgun* Yoshimune, recourse was again had to debased coins, and economical troubles again ensued. Something of these embarrassments must be ascribed to the drain of gold resulting from the country's foreign trade. Japan, in the early days, had little to sell to foreign merchants, but found much to buy from them. The records say that from 1596 to 1638 the exports of precious metals amounted to six million *riyo* of gold (nine and a half millions sterling), nine million pounds (avoir-dupois) of silver, and some three million pounds of copper. These figures represent, in the case



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of gold, nearly one-half, and in the case of silver almost the whole, of the coins struck at the mint during the same interval. Dutch importers sold as much as three and one fourth million dollars (Mexican) worth of commodities annually to the Japanese at that epoch, and not rarely two hundred Chinese junks might be seen at one time in the harbour of Nagasaki. Yet no attempt was made to impose official restrictions upon the amount of these import transactions, or on the consequent exodus of specie, until the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and not before 1715 were drastic measures adopted to enforce such restrictions. The country's store of precious metals had by that time been greatly reduced, and financiers of mediocre acumen might be excused if debasement of the currency suggested itself as an easy, sufficient, and profitable method of checking the outflow.

Other unwonted phenomena that gave much concern to the Tokugawa rulers in the second half of the eighteenth century were the rapid growth of cities and the turbulence of agriculturists. The former was a natural result of the system inaugurated by Iyeyasu, which, by compelling the feudal magnates to keep establishments in Yedo, caused a multitude of tradesmen to flock to the capital, and thus produced a rapid centralisation of wealth. The *Shōgun's* ministers saw not only that the scale of living became constantly higher, with a corresponding apprecia-



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tion of commodities, but also that the vices which flourish wherever men congregate, threatened widespread demoralisation. Various empirical attempts to check the growth of the city proved altogether abortive. *Samurai* and farmers were forbidden to sell their lands to merchants, vetoes were imposed on the use of costly articles or the wearing of rich apparel, and philosophic doctrines were invoked to discredit the plutocratic tendency of the time. The chief effect of such efforts was to impair the prestige of the Shogunate by their obvious impotency. On the other hand, the heavy expenditures imposed on the feudal chiefs for the maintenance of their magnificent establishments in Yedo, where each of them had urban and suburban residences of palatial dimensions standing in beautiful parks, compelled them to have frequent recourse to the farmers for pecuniary assistance. But the farmers, between whom and the *samurai* the gulf had gradually grown less as long-continued peace deprived the latter of his uses and as poverty brought him into contempt, were no longer the submissive serfs of former times. Again and again they revolted against the oppressions of the feudatories, and on one occasion a vast concourse of rustics, aggregating two hundred thousand, were with difficulty restrained from marching upon Yedo to present a statement of their grievances to the *Shōgun* himself. It is true that the ringleaders

of these demonstrations were severely punished, death being commonly meted out to them and their families ; but they did not perish fruitlessly, for the grievances of their followers generally found redress, and the authority of the feudal chiefs as well as of the *Shōgun's* government grew steadily more apocryphal whenever the "mat-banner and bamboo spear" of the farmer extorted consideration from the two-sworded *samurai*.

To these factors working for the fall of feudalism must be added increasing disaffection among the *samurai* themselves, owing to their virtual loss of caste in the presence of tradesmen who had acquired a new knowledge of the value of wealth, and of land-owners who lived sumptuous lives without any derogatory labour, and owing, above all, to their own penury, which compelled them to seek means of subsistence in manual toil. With nothing to lose and everything to gain, these men were ready to throw themselves into any intrigue. It cannot be supposed that they cared much about theories of government. Yet they took trouble to rouse the Court nobles in Kyōtō to a sense of the evils of divided power, as between the Emperor and the *Shōgun*, and to expose the national defects of feudalism. They failed to produce any immediately visible effect upon the current of events, but their action unquestionably contributed to the general feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction that was then growing up throughout the country.

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It was at this time also that the Yedo Court began to be divided against itself. There was a party of the *Shōgun* (Iyeharu, 1760–1786), a party of his favourite mistress, a party of the chief minister, a party of the heir apparent, and a party of the Mito family. To trace the lines of this division would be wearisome and useless. Sufficient to say that it was chiefly caused by a departure from the fixed order of succession in choosing an heir, the title of the “Three Families” being set aside in favour of Iyenari, a scion of the Hitotsubashi house.

The ethics of the nation were at their worst in the days (1760–1786) of the *Shōgun* Iyeharu. Bribery was practised openly and shamelessly. Pauperism prevailed extensively in the chief cities, with its usual accompaniments of theft and incendiarism. Conflagrations became so common in Yedo that the citizens learned to regard them as one of the inevitable ills of daily life. In 1760 one-half of the city was reduced to ashes, and eleven years later a fire, burning for ten days, swept over five districts, killed four hundred persons, and laid waste a space ten miles long and two and a half in width. Several of the great nobles began to assume a defiant mien towards the *Shōgun*. Men of learning were regarded as interesting curiosities rather than as public benefactors. Society abandoned itself to excesses of all kinds. The queen of the day was the professional *danseuse*, and even among men



skill in dancing and singing constituted the highest title to consideration. The plutocrat took precedence of the *bushi*. The officials that conducted the administration were corrupt and incompetent. For a moment this evil state of affairs was checked by the shock of natural calamities. In the autumn of 1771 a hurricane swept over the country and destroyed a great part of the crops. In the spring of 1773 a pestilence killed ninety thousand people in four months. In 1782 a volcanic eruption (Mount Asama) buried a number of villages under mud and rocks. In 1783 a famine reduced the people to such extremities that they subsisted on dogs, cats, rats, herbs, roots, and bark. Matsudaira Sadanobu, chief minister of the *Shōgun* Iyenari (1787-1838), called to power by these catastrophes, introduced drastic reforms, and might have effected a lasting improvement had he not wrongly gauged the tendency of the time. He failed to detect the forces working to produce a reaction against the despotic sway which Chinese literature and Chinese philosophy had exercised almost uninterruptedly since the beginning of the Tokugawa epoch, and he devoted all his energies to an attempt to bring the nation into one ethical fold with Chu, the great Confucian commentator, for pastor. Any procedure, however arbitrary, seemed justifiable in the eyes of this statesman, provided that it conduced to his great aim of unifying national thought. He



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made it an imprisonable offence to investigate or teach any philosophy save that of the *Sung* expounder of the *Analects*. Of course such an attempt to coerce men's intellects strengthened the moral revolt it was intended to check. The study of Japanese literature and Japanese history acquired fresh popularity. It has been already shown that this study owed its inception to the great Mitsukuni (Kōmon), feudal chief of Mito, under whose patronage a hundred-volume history, *Dai-Nihon-shi*, was compiled in the second half of the seventeenth century. A still profounder scholar, Motoori Norinaga, wore the mantle of Mitsukuni in the second half of the eighteenth century, and threw all his intellectual strength into the cause of a revival of whatever was purely Japanese, whether of language, of literature, of religion, or of tradition. Strange to say, the *Shōgun* and his chief minister, although they sought so earnestly to popularise Confucianism as expounded by Chu, ultimately tolerated the Japanese revival and even encouraged it, opening an academy for its advocates, and themselves taking a share in the investigations. They did not see that Japanese history was a story of perpetual usurpations on the part of rival clans, of encroachments upon the prerogatives of the sovereign and thefts of his authority, of the culture and dignity of the Court nobles despite their many faults, and of the neglected right of the Emperor to exercise administrative power. An incident of the

time furnished an object lesson in these principles. The Emperor (Kōkaku), desiring to give a certain title to his father, sent an envoy to Yedo to consult the *Shōgun*. But it happened just then that the *Shōgun* contemplated giving a similar title to his own father. The proposal from the Kyōtō Court was regarded as a deliberate scheme, and when the Emperor's envoys pressed it, they were actually punished by the *Shōgun*. Voices were now raised loudly denouncing the arbitrariness of the Tokugawa. They did not as yet become audible in influential quarters, but they nevertheless indicated the growth of a sentiment fatal to the permanence of the Yedo administration.

It will be easily understood that although the revival of pure Japanese literature, of the Japanese religious cult and of the ethics connected with it, was in effect a rebellion against the despotic sway of Chinese authority, the latter had in fact prepared the route to the goal indicated by the former. For whereas Confucianism taught that a ruler's title is valid only so long as his administration conduces to the welfare of the ruled, *Shintō* showed the people whither they should turn for relief from the incompetent and injurious sway of the *Shōguns*. Thus, though the two stood nominally opposed to each other, both had the same political tendency.

At this epoch a new factor of disturbance appeared upon the scene: the Russians began

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to push southward from Kamchatka. There was nothing like deliberate aggression on a large scale, but only a gradual movement with occasional incidents of violence and trespass. So insignificant indeed, were these evidences of foreign enterprise, that sixteen years passed before the officials in Yedo obtained intelligence of what was going on in the north, and they then persuaded themselves that rumour had greatly distorted the facts. But in truth this resurrection of the problem of foreign intercourse opened the last chapter of the history of Japanese feudalism.

## Chapter V

### *LATER PERIOD OF THE TOKUGAWA*

**D**URING all these years, from the early part of the seventeenth century until the last quarter of the eighteenth, vague conceptions of Occidental civilisation and Occidental sciences had been filtrating into the country through the narrow door of Dutch trade in Nagasaki. The study of medicine chiefly contributed to indicate how wide the interval between the civilisations of the West and the East had grown since the beginning of Japan's policy of isolation. To prosecute such a study with any measure of success despite the difficulties presenting themselves, showed significant earnestness in the pursuit of knowledge. Everything had to be done in secret, since discovery signified the severest punishment. In truth, the indomitable energy of a few obscure students who procured a rare volume from the Deshima factory at almost incredible cost, and, without the aid of an instructor or a dictionary, taught themselves the language in which it was written, is a story of reality stranger than fiction. But the movement had nothing of a national



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character; it did not extend beyond a small coterie of students, and the people in general remained ignorant of such researches. Presently Ono Riushihei, a member of this band of students, compiled a remarkable book. It contained a singularly accurate account of the manners and customs as well as of the military and naval organisations of Occidental States; it warned Japan that the Russians would one day show themselves a formidable enemy on her northern border, and it urged the advisability of building a fleet and constructing coast-defences. The Yedo authorities denounced the work as misleading and injurious, seized all the copies, burned them, and placed the author in confinement. Seldom have events so completely and rapidly vindicated a prediction. Riushihei's punishment had not lasted quite five months when a Russian ship arrived at Yezo, pretexting a desire to restore to their homes some castaway Japanese sailors. Riushihei was at once released from confinement, and the wisdom of his views received general recognition.

It must indeed be recorded, in justice to the perspicacity of the *Shōgun's* ministers, that from the very beginning of the series of disturbing episodes which thenceforth occurred in connection with foreign policy, they partially appreciated the hopelessness of offering armed opposition to the coming of Western ships. Bound, on the one hand, to respect the traditions of

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international seclusion handed down to them through ten generations, they understood, on the other, that the measures adopted to enforce these traditions had crippled the nation's powers of resistance. Instead of following the high-handed example of Iyeyasu and Iyemitsu, they confined themselves to politely informing the Russians that a return visit from them was not desired. The Russians paid no attention to this rebuff. They repeated their visits six times in the course of the next twenty years, at one moment assuming a friendly mien, at another raiding Japan's northern islands or landing to effect surveys; to-day kidnapping Japanese subjects, to-morrow restoring them with apologies. It is certain that had not the Napoleonic wars withdrawn Russia's attention from the Far East, she would either have forced foreign intercourse upon the Japanese before the close of the nineteenth century's second decade, or annexed all the Empire's northern islands. Japan was helpless. A semblance of armed preparation was made in 1807 by bestowing the *Shōgun's* daughter on Date, feudal chief of Sendai, appointing him to guard the shores of Hokkaidō, and building forts to defend the approaches to Yedo Bay. But it is doubtful whether any real value was attached to these measures. Ultimately the trivial nature of Russian aggression inspired the Japanese with some confidence, and when by and by English vessels also began to

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appear in the northern seas, the *Shōgun's* officials took heart of grace, and issued orders that any foreign ship coming within range of Japanese guns should be cannonaded.

It has been shown that from the middle of the eighteenth century the literary studies of the nation began to create a strong current of thought opposed to the system of dual government represented by the two courts of Yedo and Kyōtō. Possibly had nothing occurred to furnish signal proof of the system's practical defects, it might have long survived this theoretical disapproval. But the crisis caused by the advent of foreign ships and by the forceful renewal of foreign intercourse afforded a convincing proof of the Shōgunate's incapacity to protect the State's supposed interests and to enforce the traditional policy of isolation which the nation had learned to consider absolutely essential to the Empire's integrity.

When confronted by this crisis, the Yedo administration had fallen into a state of great financial embarrassment. In spite of a forced loan of a million *ryō* levied from the citizens of Osaka, the *Shōgun's* ministers were obliged, in 1818, to revert to the pernicious expedients of debasing the currency, and arbitrarily readjusting the ratio between gold and silver, which they now fixed at six to one. A sudden and sharp appreciation of commodities, the disappearance of gold from circulation, and general discontent ensued. The

treasuries of the feudal chiefs also became depleted, the purchasing power of all incomes having been greatly reduced by the financial abuses of the Shogunate. Many of the nobles were heavily indebted to wealthy merchants, and few retained any sentiment of loyalty towards the Yedo Court. Japan was now visited by a calamity to which she is particularly liable, scarcity of bread-stuff owing to failure of the rice-crop, which is of as much importance to her as wheat and beef combined are to England. A three years' famine afflicted the nation, from 1833 to 1835. Starving folk began to wander about committing outrages, and one of the *Shōgun's* trusted vassals, a man<sup>1</sup> of the highest repute, headed an abortive rebellion. Then, in 1838, the Yedo Castle was destroyed by fire, and a special levy, in the form of a heavy income tax, had to be resorted to.

Amid all these troubles the Dutch at Nagasaki sent information to Yedo that British vessels might be expected at any moment, carrying some shipwrecked Japanese subjects. The Dutch, it may be observed, lost no opportunity of arousing Japanese suspicion against the English. Commercial rivalry was not more scrupulous in those days than it is at present. It happened that a man of exceptional ability and resolution, Mizuno Tadakuni, was then at the head of the Yedo administration. He issued an order that, for whatever purpose foreign ships came, they must be

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 26.



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driven back. But there were at that time several Japanese students of foreign affairs in Yedo. Some had been pupils of the intrepid traveller, Siebold, and some had acquired their information from books only. These men appreciated the true character of foreign civilisation, and were at once too patriotic and too courageous to subserve their conviction to considerations of personal safety. The necessity of combining the fragments of knowledge that each had been able to collect independently induced them to form a society, and in spite of the odium attaching to their action, and in spite of being called the "barbarian association" by the public, they pursued their researches unceasingly. When news reached them that the *Shōgun's* chief minister had issued the order spoken of above, they decided that duty to their country demanded an open protest against such a mistaken and dangerous policy. Two of the leading members compiled a volume, setting forth, in plain terms, the truth, as they conceived it, especially with regard to England. They presented copies of the book to prominent officials of the Administration. The immediate consequence of this heroic act — for it merits no lesser epithet — was that the members of the society were seized and thrown into prison. But the brochure did not fail of all effect. It strengthened the chief minister's conviction that unless the nation made a supreme effort to organise its defences, no hope of resist-

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ing foreign aggression could be entertained; it probably helped to inspire the radical reforms, both economical and military, that were then undertaken, and it may have had much to do with the minister's subsequent revocation of his anti-foreign order. For the order was actually revoked within a few years of its issue; not, indeed, because the *Shōgun's* Government had become reconciled to foreign intercourse, but because they recognised the advisability of avoiding war with such formidable enemies as the men from the Occident were now seen to be.

It is not to be supposed that in this matter of renewing her relations with the outer world, Japan was required to make any sudden decision under stress of visible menace. She had ample notice of the course events were taking.

A French ship, coming to the Riukiu Islands in 1846, pretexted the probable advent of the English as an argument to induce the islanders to place themselves under French protection. In the same year the King of Holland sent to the Yedo Court some scientific books and a map of the world, with a covering letter advising that the country should at once abandon its policy of isolation. It is related that this map of the world produced a profound impression in the *Shōgun's* capital, but as the Japanese had become acquainted with the terrestrial globe in 1631, they must have already known something of their country's comparative insignificance.

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Again, in 1849, the King of Holland notified the *Shōgun* that an American fleet might be expected in Japanese waters the following year, and that, unless Japan agreed to enter into friendly relations, war must follow. His Majesty enclosed in his despatch an approximate draft of the intended treaty, and a copy of a memorandum addressed by America to European nations, justifying her contemplated action on the ground that it would inure to the advantage of Japan as well as to that of the Occident.

The year 1853 saw this warning fulfilled. Commodore Perry entered Uruga Bay, near Yokosuka. He had four ships and five hundred and sixty men. In Yedo his force was supposed to be ten ships and five thousand men; in Kyōtō it became one hundred ships and one hundred thousand men.

The event created as much astonishment and alarm as though no notice of its probability had ever been received. The *Shōgun's* ministers issued orders that so soon as the foreign vessels entered Yedo Bay, the fire-bells should be rung in quick time, and every one, donning his fire uniform, should hasten to his post. The Imperial Court in Kyōtō directed that at the seven principal shrines and at all the great temples special prayers should be offered for the safety of the nation and for the destruction of foreigners. Such measures vividly illustrated the helplessness of Japan to meet the crisis that now threatened.

From the very outset the steps taken by the *Shōgun's* administration were prophetic of its downfall. A council of feudal chiefs was summoned to consider the course that should be pursued. Never previously, since the establishment of the Tokugawa rule in Yedo, had the *Shōgun's* ministers submitted any question, executive or political, to the consideration of the feudatories. A more signal abrogation of autocratic power could not have been effected. The *Shōgun* thereby virtually abdicated his position as the nation's administrative sovereign, and placed himself on a level with all the territorial nobles who had hitherto been required to render implicit obedience to his orders. It becomes interesting to determine the motive and source of such a novel departure. Some writers have been disposed to treat it merely as an evidence of thoughtless perplexity. Others regard it as a pusillanimous endeavour to shift to the shoulders of the feudatories a responsibility which the Shogunate found unbearable. Both explanations may be partially true. It is possible that the Yedo Government did not perceive the full consequences of openly recognising the right of the feudatories to a voice in the management of State affairs. It is also possible that the *Shōgun's* advisers, too well informed to contemplate serious resistance to foreign demands, too timid of public opinion to openly confess their conviction, hoped, by obtaining from the feudatories a declaration in favour



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of a pacific policy, to escape at once the disaster of war and the odium of violating a national conviction. But whatever secondary value attaches to these conjectures, it appears certain that the suggestion to summon a conference of feudal nobles emanated from the students of Chinese philosophy. During the first century of Tokugawa rule these men occupied an academical position. But in the year 1690, when the *Shōgun* Tsunayoshi ruled, a school called the "hall of sages" (*Seidō*) was established in Yedo, and scholars successful in its examinations became eligible for official appointments equally with proficient in military exercises. Many such literati occupied administrative posts at the time of the coming of the American ships, and although their influence had hitherto been insignificant, the peculiar nature of the crisis now gave unwonted weight to their views. From the writings of Confucius and Mencius they had learned to attach respect to popular opinion, and in obedience to their political creed, they counselled recourse to the advice of the feudal nobles. The *Shōgun's* ministers, in accepting that counsel, probably reckoned on secretly swaying the nobles to declare openly for peace. But the nobles, by asserting their independence, showed that they understood their new position. A majority pronounced against foreign intercourse even at the cost of war; a few advised temporary concessions pending the completion of preparations to expel

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the intruders, and a still smaller number recommended peaceful intercourse with the outer world. It may be stated at once that subsequent events threw great doubt on the sincerity of the advocates of war. Those that had spoken honestly spoke in ignorance, and fuller knowledge modified their views; those that had spoken with knowledge lacked the courage of their convictions, and for the sake of appearance counselled a course which they knew to be impracticable.

As for the *Shōgun's* ministers, their action reflected the perplexity and duplicity of the time. They issued an instruction so ambiguous that no one could undertake to interpret it accurately. It did not sanction foreign intercourse, but it did not order warlike operations to enforce isolation; it directed that defensive measures should be vigorously pushed, but it did not intimate that their completion would be the signal for driving away the aliens; it hinted that the honour of the nation was involved in obeying the old traditions, but it counselled an amicable and forbearing spirit. Very little perspicacity was needed to detect the weakness of rulers speaking with such an uncertain voice.

Another self-effacing step taken by the *Shōgun* was to address to the Court in Kyōtō a formal report of the advent of the American ships. This, too, amounted to an open abrogation of the administrative autocracy which formed the basis of the Tokugawa system. Iyeyasu had

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definitely excluded the Kyōtō Court from the sphere of national affairs, and all his successors, with one exception, had governed in obedience to that principle. But now the *Shōgun* Iyeyoshi seemed to place himself under the shadow of the Imperial Court at the very moment when his urgent duty, according to popular conception, was to interpose between the Throne and the danger menacing it from abroad.

The consequences of this step were even more far-reaching than those that attended the Shogunate's recourse to a council of feudatories. For the renaissance of the literature and traditions of ancient Japan, inaugurated by Mito students in the second half of the seventeenth century, had been carried to its culminating point by a remarkable triad of scholars, Mabuchi, Motoori, and Hirata, who worked with singular assiduity and wrote voluminously throughout a great part of the eighteenth century down to the middle of the nineteenth,<sup>1</sup> and the doctrines enunciated by this remarkable school of thinkers had now sunk deep into the hearts of a large section of the people. Belief in the divine origin of the Emperor had become a living faith instead of a moribund tradition, and many were beginning to regard the administration of the *Shōgun* as a sacrilegious invasion of the Mikado's heaven-descended prerogatives. It is asserted that the *Shōgun* Iyeyoshi himself was more or less swayed by these theories,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 27.



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and that, in addressing the Throne, he obeyed a genuine sentiment of loyalty. Other accounts attribute his action to the advice of his ministers, especially that of the Prince of Mito. Whatever the truth may be as to the motive of the step, it presented itself to the people in the light of an official recognition of the new Imperialism. The "pure *Shintō* creed" which had hitherto been only academical, now assumed a practically political character, and men's eyes turned to the Court in Kyōtō as the real centre of national authority.

Another sentiment also was called into active existence at this crisis, the sentiment of patriotism. During many hundreds of years there had been no such thing as country in the moral vista of the educated Japanese. His loyalty did not look beyond the limits of fief or family. Even the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century failed to strike a universal chord of patriotism: the brave soldiers that repelled the attack achieved local rather than national renown. But the incidents culminating in the expulsion of Christians and the closing of the country in the early part of the seventeenth century, and the inflexible enforcement of a policy of national isolation throughout the Tokugawa era, insensibly taught men to think of Japan as an entity, and their perception, greatly quickened by the *Shintō* revivalists' doctrine of the "land of the gods," was now suddenly stirred into almost passionate activ-



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ity when the news went abroad that foreigners had come to establish, by force if necessary, an intercourse probably fatal to the country's independence. A logical accompaniment of this mood was the conviction that since the nation, as a whole, was threatened, the nation, as a whole, must resist; and by the light of that conviction the inter-fief jealousies and the divided rule of the Emperor and the *Shōgun* represented obvious sources of weakness. Everything, therefore, pointed to the sovereign as the national rallying point, and since His Majesty's first act, on learning of the arrival of foreign ships, had been to pray for heaven's guardianship of the sacred land, and for the destruction of the intruders, the nation found itself furnished with a rallying cry which soon reverberated from end to end of the country, *Son nō jō-i* (Revere the sovereign, expel the alien).

This condition of public thought naturally required some time for development, and as the sequence of events must be closely followed just at this stage, it will be wise to revert to their chronological order.

The Americans did not insist on the immediate conclusion of a treaty. They agreed to wait a year. The Japanese, on their side, thought that the postponement would probably be permanent. So many rumours of the advent of foreigners had proved delusive in the past that the Americans' announcement of an intention to

return scarcely seemed a serious menace. When, therefore, Commodore Perry did really reappear off Uraga in the spring of 1854, consternation fell upon the *Shōgun's* ministers. They issued orders to the feudatories throughout the Empire to prepare for war, and they sent officials to Uraga to hold the intruders there. If only the Americans could be prevented from entering Yedo Bay, the situation might be saved. Commodore Perry consented to a compromise: he did not push further than the harbour now overlooked by the Yokohama settlement, and there he anchored. Could he have obtained any knowledge of the perturbation produced in Yedo by his doings, he would probably have framed his demands on a much larger scale. But he did not know that every time the tide swung his vessels' prows northward, the news, carried to Yedo by flying messengers, created a general panic; and that whenever the ships rode with their prows southward, the intelligence of their changed position caused the capital to breathe again, so that for some days moods of despair and hope succeeded each other in regular succession. Neither did he know that the *Shōgun's* officials, or at any rate those to whom was entrusted the duty of dealing with the American envoy, never had any idea of serious resistance. Contenting himself, therefore, with a treaty guaranteeing intercourse on a limited scale, the American envoy sailed away.

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It is possible that if even then the Yedo Court had boldly avowed and justified its act, the nation would have acquiesced, however unwillingly, for the anti-foreign cry had not yet acquired any volume, and no one was prepared to assume the responsibility of making a public protest. But the Yedo Court acted a disingenuous part. Instead of revoking its warlike instructions and frankly disclosing the nature of the agreement just concluded, it published a deceptive account of the latter and virtually confirmed the former. It adopted, in short, the most effective method of bringing ultimate embarrassment upon itself, and of fomenting the nation's antipathy towards the strangers to whom a promise of friendly intercourse had just been given.

For a time, however, this policy of pretence succeeded, especially as it was accompanied by genuine and striking measures of reform. Vigorous preparations for coast defence were made. A military school was established in Yedo and a naval in Nagasaki. Many administrative abuses were abolished. The official door was thrown open to men of talent and competence, irrespective of birth. The finances were reorganised in a manner at once courageous and intelligent. In short, the Shogunate, then under the direction of one of the ablest statesmen that ever directed its policy, Abe Masahiro, feudal chief of Ise, evinced a spirit of earnestness and resolution that won general praise. The anti-foreign voices be-



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came silent. For three years and a half no presage could have been discerned of the storm destined soon to burst over the country. It seemed indeed as though the *Shōgun's* administration was about to enter upon a new era of stability, for Abe, with profound sagacity, succeeded in winning the alliance of the Tokugawa's hereditary enemy, the Satsuma chief, then the most powerful feudatory in Japan, by contracting a marriage between the latter's daughter and the *Shogun*, and further secured the loyal coöperation of the Prince of Mito, a man of exceptional capacity and reputation.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail how the first Consul-General of the United States in Japan, Mr. Townsend Harris, reached Shimoda in 1856; how he made his way to Yedo in 1857, in spite of strenuous official opposition; how he had audience of the *Shōgun*, and afterwards delivered in the house of the prime minister, Hotta, feudal chief of Bitchiu—the great Abe had died three months previously—a speech of six hours' duration, which brought a flood of light to the minds of his hearers, and won for the cause of foreign intercourse the permanent allegiance of a group of leading politicians; and how, finally, by adroit diplomacy in which the menace of a British fleet's probable arrival played a large part, he succeeded in concluding, in 1858, the first treaty that granted genuine commercial privileges to for-



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eigners. Full accounts of all these incidents have already been published.

This treaty was the signal for an outburst of national indignation. The former conventions — the plural is used because Russia, Holland, and England had secured for themselves treaties similar to that concluded by Commodore Perry — had been of very limited scope: they merely opened three harbours of refuge to foreign vessels. It had been possible for the *Shōgun's* ministers to represent them in the light of acts of charity, and in that sense they had been understood by a large section of the nation. But the treaty of 1858 provided for the coming of foreign merchants, indicated places of residence for them, and definitely terminated Japan's traditional isolation. There could be no mistake about its meaning. Hence the announcement of its terms evoked fierce protests from all quarters, and a powerful anti-foreign agitation was organised with the Prince of Mito at its head.

Mito, ever since the days of its second feudal chief, the celebrated Kōmon, had been a nursery of anti-feudal politicians. At the time when the American ships cast anchor at Uraga, the fief was in the hands of Rekkō, a man scarcely second to Kōmon in ability and of far more radical views. It is doubtful whether Rekkō believed sincerely in the possibility of continued national seclusion. He certainly allowed his

fief to be the centre of such a propaganda. But of himself those that knew him best allege that he was prepared to admit foreigners to the country, though he insisted on surrounding the concession with conditions dictated by Japan in obedience to her own interests, and that, in order to retain mastery of the situation in that degree, he advocated preparations for war, with the firm purpose of resorting to it if necessary. It is consistent with such a theory that he remained an active supporter of the Yedo Court in spite of the signature of the Perry convention, but that, when the Harris treaty gave away the situation completely, and showed the *Shōgun's* ministers in the light of men who, while simulating a warlike mien in order to placate the nation, were really bent upon pacific concessions only, he became a determined opponent of the Shōgunate, and, resigning his posts as superintendent of coast defence and director of military reforms, retired to Mito, whither the eyes of the nation followed him as the upholder of its traditions and its champion against foreign aggression.

Within a brief time after these events, the people ranged themselves into three parties. The first was headed by the *Shōgun's* chief minister and by the so-called "Dutch students," who now occupied a high place in official favour. This party's platform was progress and liberalism. They advocated the opening of the country and the establishment of free commercial

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intercourse with foreigners, and they showed high moral courage in championing such views in spite of hearing themselves fiercely denounced as renegades and national enemies. The second party, though a unit as to the advisability of setting narrow limits to foreign intercourse, entertained divergent views on the subject of the procedure to be followed. One of its sections held that as an object lesson must be provided to teach the nation its own weakness compared with the overwhelming strength of Europe and America, and as, at the same time, even a war in which Japan suffered defeat would doubtless have the effect of modifying the arbitrariness of foreigners, the best plan was to fight at once. The other section advised temporary compliance with foreign demands, in order to gain time for developing force to drive out the alien altogether. Alike anti-foreign in their ultimate purpose, these two sections nevertheless became mutually distrustful and, in the end, implacably hostile. The third party did not reason at all, but simply declaimed against conceding anything whatever to aliens.

All this sounds very bigoted and uncivilised, but when the circumstances under which foreign intercourse came to an end in the seventeenth century are recalled, and when it is remembered that during nearly two hundred and fifty years the people had harboured a firm conviction that to admit foreigners was to forfeit national inde-

pendence, there is no difficulty in understanding the temper aroused by the news of the Harris treaty. Indeed, to any student of the literature that circulated among the Japanese immediately prior to the mission of Commodore Perry, the wonder is, not that great difficulties were experienced in concluding a treaty, but that any section of the people could be induced to range themselves on the side of liberalism. The writings of the time were saturated with anti-foreign sentiment. Authors revelled in such expressions as "imperial customs" (*Kwōfū*), "imperial country" (*Kwōkoku*), "divine dignity" (*Shin-i*), "land of the gods" (*Shin-shū*), and similar terms indicating fanatical pride in the Empire and its institutions. On the other hand, "hideous aliens" (*shū-i*), "barbarian bandits" (*banzoku*), "sea monsters" (*kaikwai*), and many similarly opprobrious epithets were habitually applied to foreigners, until men ceased to rank them among human beings; association with them came to spell national ruin; their sciences were counted black magic, and their religion was deemed a cloak for political intrigue.

Fully cognisant of the difficulties arising out of this national mood, the *Shōgun's* ministers summoned another meeting of feudatories and sought to win them to the cause of liberalism by arguments similar to those Mr. Townsend Harris had used in his great speech. But the feudatories were in no temper to listen to reason. Their



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unique idea was that the country had been betrayed. Nothing remained, therefore, except to issue a formal decree that the Yedo Court had definitely abandoned the traditional policy of isolation. A few months previously the same Court, by means of a similar instrument, had represented the Perry convention in the light of an irksome compromise, had spoken of the Americans as persons of "arbitrary and lawless manners," and had invited the nation to strenuously undertake naval and military preparations with the implied purpose of reverting to the time-honoured state of seclusion. Now a decree of diametrically opposite import was issued. It may well be supposed that such evidences of variability did not strengthen the nation's respect for the Shogunate. The conservatives openly declared that the Yedo Government had harboured pacific intentions from the first, and that it had simulated a warlike mien merely to placate popular indignation.

The Prince of Mito has been spoken of above as leader of the extreme conservatives. But a greater than the Prince of Mito stood at the head of the movement,—the Emperor himself. The Emperor, when the news of Perry's first coming reached Kyōtō, ordered that the succour of the gods should be supplicated, just as it had been supplicated at the time of the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century; and when he heard of Perry's second coming, he issued an edict direct-

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ing that all temple bells not in actual use should be cast into cannon. There is no reason to assume that His Majesty was swayed in this matter by strong anti-foreign prejudices, or that he would have adopted such a course on his own initiative. Apart from the fact that the views of the Mikados in Kyōtō had long ceased to be anything but a reflection of their immediate surroundings, it has to be noted that, on this occasion, the Emperor Kōmei shaped his procedure in accordance with indications furnished from Yedo. The *Shōgun's* Court had virtually denounced foreign intercourse; the *Shōgun's* ministers had invited the nation to arm for the defence of its traditional convictions; the Emperor's ministers and the Emperor himself merely followed Yedo's lead.

But now Yedo had performed a complete *volte-face*. What was Kyōtō to do? Probably if the Imperial capital had listened to that epoch-making speech of Mr. Townsend Harris, had perused all the arguments and had weighed all the circumstances making for a treaty with America as a precedent to avert harsher demands on the part of other States, the Emperor's advisers might have followed the *Shōgun* in welcoming foreigners, as they had previously followed him in repelling them. But Kyōtō saw the change only and did not understand the causes.

The anti-foreign and anti-feudal politicians were not slow to appreciate the opportunity thus afforded. They understood that their best chance

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of success consisted in widening the breach between the two Courts, and they applied themselves to achieve that end by urging the Emperor to veto the treaty. Intercourse between the feudatories and the Imperial Court was forbidden by the laws of the *Shōgun*. But the *Shōgun* himself had departed from the strictest traditions of the Tokugawa administration when he referred the question of foreign intercourse to the feudatories and to the sovereign, and when he entered no protest against the Emperor's edict directing the founding of cannon from temple bells, though such an edict constituted a plain interference in administrative affairs. The feudal nobles might well conclude that the old restrictions had been relaxed. At all events, they acted on that hypothesis; notably the Prince of Mito, who sent emissaries to Kyōtō with instructions to work strenuously for the repudiation of the treaty.

Informed of these things, the *Shōgun's* chief minister, Hotta, proceeded to Kyōtō. He set out with the conviction that his representations would produce a complete change of opinion in the Imperial capital. But the whole of the Court nobility opposed him, and after much discussion the Emperor issued an order that the question should be submitted to the feudatories and that an heir to the Shogunate should be nominated at once.

A significance not superficially apparent at-

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tached to the latter part of this edict. The *Shōgun* Iyesada was virtually a witling. He had been married, as already stated, to an adopted daughter of the feudal chief of Satsuma, but there was no issue of the marriage, nor had there ever been any possibility of issue. Two candidates for the heirship offered. They were Keiki, son of the Prince of Mito, a man of matured intellect and high capacities, and Iyemochi, Prince of Kii, a lad of thirteen. Public opinion unanimously indicated the former as the more fitting, and his connection with the house of Mito was accepted as an assurance of anti-foreign bias. Hence, although the Imperial decree did not actually name him, its intention could not be mistaken. But public opinion erred in this instance. Keiki did not advocate national seclusion. Had the choice fallen on him, he would have continued the policy of Hotta and the liberals, while at the same time seeking to soften the hostility of the Mito faction. Hotta, appreciating these things, sought to bring about the nomination; but the *Shōgun's* household, knowing that Keiki's appointment would be equivalent to their master's abrogation, cast about for means to prevent it, and found them in inducing the *Shōgun* to summon Ii, feudal chief of Kamon, to the highest post in the Yedo Court, that of *Tairo* (great elder).

Ii was probably the ablest of the able men thrown to the surface by the seething current of



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events in this troubled epoch. It is unnecessary to depict his character ; his deeds are sufficiently eloquent. Without a moment's hesitation he reverted to the autocratic principles of the *Shōgun's* administration ; caused the young prince of Kii to be nominated heir, and concluded the Harris treaty, which had hitherto been awaiting signature.<sup>1</sup> A majority of the powerful feudatories now joined the opposition. The Prince of Mito protested in writing. He insisted that the sanction of the Imperial Court must be sought before concluding the treaty ; that various restrictions should be imposed on foreign intercourse — among them being a drastic interdict against the building of Christian places of worship — and that if foreigners were unwilling to accept these conditions, they must be asked to defer the treaty for fifteen or twenty years. It is thus apparent that even the leader of the anti-foreign party, as the Prince of Mito subsequently became, concurred with the leader of the liberals concerning the impossibility of rejecting foreign advances altogether. The difference was that one side wanted to impose conditions and obtain delay by seeking the sovereign's sanction ; the other wished to conclude the treaty forthwith so as to avoid national disaster.

The events that ensued throw a vivid light on the nature of Japanese politics and the character of the men that had to deal with them. Death

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 28.

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removed the semi-idiotic *Shōgun* Iyesada, and an unprecedented period elapsed before the coming of an Imperial mandate to his successor. The issue of such a mandate was in truth a mere matter of form. Four or five days should have sufficed for its preparation and transmission to Yedo. Yet it did not reach the latter city until the fifteenth day after the Imperial seal had been affixed to it. The delay is one of the unsolved mysteries of history, since the official responsible for it committed suicide without revealing anything. On the eve of the new *Shōgun's* proclamation, the heads of the Three Princely houses — Owari, Echizen, and Mito — repaired simultaneously to the hall of audience and demanded an interview with the *Tairō*. He was advised not to meet them; it seemed certain that he would incur deadly risk by doing so. He replied that personal danger was a small matter compared with shirking his duty. A stormy discussion ensued, lasting for several hours. At length the leaders of the opposition showed themselves willing to compromise; they would agree to the treaty provided that Keiki were appointed *Shōgun*. This is a landmark in the annals of the era. It indicates that domestic politics occupied a larger space than foreign in the eyes of the recusant nobles. The *Tairō*, however, would not yield a point. Not only was the young *Shōgun* duly installed on the following day, but the first step he took, by the advice of the *Tairō*, was to punish

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the leaders of the opposition, confining them to their mansions or forbidding their attendance at Court. The die was now irrevocably cast, and the radical section of the anti-foreign party thenceforth looked to the Prince of Mito as their leader.

While these events were happening behind the scenes, the Foreign Representatives entertained great doubts of the Yedo Government's good faith. They imagined that the abiding desire of the *Shōgun's* ministers was either to avoid making treaties or to evade them when made. Such doubts, though not unnatural under the circumstances of the time, are now known to have been without solid basis. In the written communication addressed to the Throne by the Yedo statesmen after the conclusion of the Harris treaty, there is plain evidence that they intended to observe their new obligations loyally. The only questionable point is a suggestion that after the strengthening of the army and the navy the problem of peace or war might be solved. "If peaceful relations be maintained until the time appointed for ratifying the treaty, the avaricious aliens will definitely see that there is not much wealth in the country, and thus, abandoning the idea of gain, they will approach us with friendly feelings only, and ultimately will pass under the influence of our Emperor's grace. We may even hope that they will be induced to make grateful offerings to the Emperor, and then it

will no longer be a question of trade but of tribute. Meanwhile we will require them to observe our laws strictly, so that we can govern them at will." There is here an audible note of sinister intention. But experience had shown that to set forth the real strength of foreign countries was only to rouse the indignation of the ignorant and haughty nobles in Kyōtō. From correspondence between the Tairō Ii and his friends in the Imperial capital, it appears that he was advised to simulate the policy of bringing foreigners under Japanese influence, and of employing for military purposes the wealth that would accrue from trade with them. In short, the despatches composed by him for the perusal of the Imperial Court must be read, not as indicating the genuine policy of the Yedo officials, but as presenting it in such a light as might placate the conservative element in Kyōtō. This deception was carried so far that an envoy subsequently sent to Kyōtō from Yedo depicted the *Shōgun* as actually hostile to foreigners, but disposed to tolerate them momentarily from considerations of expediency. The Foreign Representatives could scarcely have been expected to arrive at a correct interpretation of the situation through this maze of simulations and dissimulations, or to credit the *Shōgun* with intentions which his own ministers seemed anxious to disavow on his behalf. In Europe, at the foreign

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 29.



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legations in Yedo and among the foreigners then beginning to come to the country under the treaties, an uneasy conviction prevailed that Japan waited only for an opportunity to repudiate her engagements.

Meanwhile, although the Prince of Mito was confined to his residence in Yedo, his partisans in Kyōtō<sup>1</sup> worked strenuously to procure the intervention of the Imperial Court on his behalf. It was a repetition of the often practised device, making a catspaw of the sovereign in the interests of a subject, and it partially succeeded. The Emperor was persuaded to issue a rescript which, though couched in guarded terms, conveyed a reprimand to the *Shōgun* for concluding a treaty without previously consulting the feudatories (as directed in a former rescript), and which further suggested that the punitive measures adopted towards the Princes of Mito and Owari might lead to domestic disturbances.

A supreme trial of strength now took place between the *Shōgun* and his enemies. Envoys were despatched from Yedo to offer explanations to the Imperial Court, and the leaders of the opposition mustered their forces to thwart the design. For nearly four months the issue remained in abeyance, and the envoys finally had to pretend that the *Shōgun*, at heart averse to foreign intercourse, only awaited an opportunity to terminate it. In consideration of such

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 30.

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assurances the Emperor issued the following rescript : —

Amity and commerce with foreigners brought disgrace on the country in the past. Our ancestors were grieved by the fact. Should such relations be resumed in our reign, we shall be wanting in our duty towards our predecessors. Our will has been repeatedly made known on the subject. Manabe and Sakai have now come to Kyōtō to explain the facts, and it has been made evident that the purpose of the *Shōgun* and his officials is one with that of the Emperor. It is desirable that Kyōtō and Yedo should join their strength and plan the welfare of the Empire. We comprehend the difficulties of the situation, and sanction a postponement of the expulsion of foreigners.

The two Courts seemed to be now publicly pledged to an anti-foreign policy. Yet the issue of the rescript was regarded as a victory for Yedo. The *Tairō* himself knew, of course, that his opportunism had placed him in a position which might at any moment become impossible. He had sought to obtain the unconditional consent of the Emperor to the treaties, but finding that to insist would involve a final rupture between the sovereign and the *Shōgun*, he had accepted a compromise which not only represented him in a false light from the foreigners' point of view, but must also eventuate in serious embarrassment, unless preparations could be made to secure fresh concessions from Kyōtō before the real attitude of the Shogunate towards foreigners and the

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attitude simulated by it to pacify the conservatives became flagrantly divergent. To such preparations, therefore, the *Tairō* and his coadjutors now devoted all their strength.

During the course of the negotiations in Kyōtō, the Yedo envoys had discovered clear evidence of a formidable plot to overthrow the Shogunate. The *Tairō* was not the man to palter with such an affair. Wholesale arrests were made, and the conspirators, cited before a court whose bench had been carefully purged of all half-hearted elements, were mercilessly sentenced. Capital punishment and banishment were the lot of the most active among the subordinates; the leaders fared according to the canons of the time. The Prince of Mito was condemned to perpetual confinement in his fief; the Prince of Owari, to permanent retirement; Keiki, ex-candidate for the succession to the Shogunate, forfeited his office and was directed to live in seclusion; the heads of three branch houses of Mito, several officials of the Imperial Court, in short, a number of notable personages, were overtaken by loss and disgrace.

This event produced a profound sensation throughout the Empire. It is tolerably certain that much injustice was done. Political views found very vague expression at that time. A man's opinions were generally inferred from the company he kept, and there is reason to think that ties of personal friendship were sometimes

mistaken by the *Ansei*<sup>1</sup> judges for bonds of political conspiracy. They were directed to convict, and they convicted. The Yedo Court, under Ii's guidance, had concluded that the elements engaged in misleading the Throne must be ruthlessly crushed, and from the point of view of public expediency, they doubtless acted wisely. But the impression produced upon the public at large was that many zealous patriots had been done to death or disgraced, and it will readily be conceived that these things did not detract from the unpopularity of foreign intercourse.

Some decisive measure had now to be adopted with regard to the Imperial edict mentioned above; that is to say, the edict issued at the instance of the anti-foreign party when the news reached Kyōtō that the sovereign's indication had been disregarded in the matter of the accession to the Shogunate and that a treaty had been concluded with foreign Powers. The edict had been practically superseded, as shown above, by a later rescript, declaring union between Yedo and Kyōtō and temporarily sanctioning the treaty. Moreover, it had not been publicly promulgated. The original document, conveyed secretly to the Mito mansion in the Koishikawa suburb of Yedo,<sup>2</sup> had been carried thence to Mito, and placed in the ancestral tomb of the family, where a strong body of *samurai* guarded it night

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 31.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, note 32.



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and day. But there was evidence that the Mito men considered this edict in the light of a guarantee against concessions to foreigners, who, according to their creed, were the country's enemies, and that they thought the sovereign had confided it to their care because he doubted whether the Yedo Court could be trusted to promulgate it. Indeed, the question of promulgation caused much discussion in Yedo. The *Tairō* himself, unfalteringly consistent in his policy of restoring the *Shōgun's* administrative autocracy, maintained that the conveyance of such a document direct to a feudatory was a flagrant contravention of the powers vested in the *Shōgun*, and that the Yedo officials were competent to suppress the edict. Ultimately the Regent in Kyōtō, a faithful supporter of the *Tairō*, sought and obtained the sovereign's authority to revoke the document. But the Mito men refused to surrender it. They deemed that to temporise with foreigners was to imperil the national safety. They saw in commerce with the outer world nothing but an agent for causing the appreciation of commodities. They believed that, as one of the three great Tokugawa clans, an obligation devolved on them to save the Shogunate from its own blunders, and they professed to fear that if they surrendered the edict, the sovereign would ultimately be driven to seek the coöperation of some other clan. With regard to the possibility of driving out foreigners,

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they did not find the question conclusive. Their duty was to devote all their strength to the attempt and trust the rest to the gods. A long and closely reasoned document compiled by a leader of the Mito *samurai* set forth these considerations in language that could not fail to appeal to the loyalty and patriotism of his clansmen. It ended by declaring that a man's life is never in such danger as when he fears to lose it. The records show that nearly a score of *samurai* sealed their belief in these ideas by committing suicide.

At this stage the Mito chief himself issued to his vassals an instruction to surrender the edict. He had never been a believer in absolute international isolation, and he now severed his connection with its advocates. Thereupon the rebellious *samurai* dispersed quietly, with the exception of about a hundred desperate men who declared that they would die rather than yield. The Yedo Government gave orders for the seizure of these rebels, but before the mandate could be obeyed, the *Tairō*, Ii Kamon, fell under the swords of a party of assassins who had detached themselves from the rebels and made their way to Yedo for the purpose of killing him. He had been warned of his danger and urged to increase the strength of his escort. But he replied that no force of guards could control the hand of fate or baffle the ingenuity of resolute assassins, and, further, that the number of the



THE GRAVES OF THE FORTY-SEVEN RONINS.

The tombstone of the leader (Oishi Kuranosuke) is in the rear corner.





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*Tairō's* escort was fixed by a rule which a man in such a high position must respect.

This happened on the 3rd of March, 1860. It proved to be the first of a series of similar acts. Occasionally foreigners were the victims, but generally Japanese leaders of progress suffered. There is no difficulty in understanding why the *samurai* had recourse to his sword under the circumstances of the time. The incidents of foreign intercourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bequeathed to subsequent generations a rooted belief in the necessity of national isolation. They perceived no other way of preserving the country's integrity. Every Japanese was born with that conviction. He would have seemed to himself a traitor had he acquiesced in the signing of treaties of amity and commerce, and, above all, in the readmission of Christians to contact with the people. By the light of modern philosophy such conservatism looks irrational and even inhuman. But the Japanese regarded it by the light of experience and hereditary conviction. They had no innate prejudice against foreign intercourse; that is plain from the story related in a previous chapter. Originally they received the alien hospitably and accepted the products of his civilisation with intelligent appreciation. But he had shown himself, as they firmly believed, an aggressive enemy, whose trade methods impoverished their country, and whose religion served as a cloak for sinister designs against the

Empire's independence. It was the duty of every patriot to avert the recurrence of the old peril, against which the country's greatest statesmen and captains, the *Taikō*, Iyeyasu and Iyemitsu, had warned their own and succeeding generations. Whatever credit these illustrious men possessed in the mind of the nation, whatever reverence their memory commanded, was inseparably associated with the policy of seclusion which they had adopted in the apparent interests of their country and in despite of their own inclinations. The impartial historian has no choice but to admit that had the Japanese tamely suffered the resumption of foreign intercourse in the nineteenth century, they would have done violence to convictions which no patriot may ignore, and shown themselves lacking in one of the essential ingredients of national spirit. When foreigners were cut down under circumstances that left them no chance of resistance, their friends and fellow countrymen naturally denounced such acts as craven and savage. But it is necessary to remember that the perpetrators were men who had sacrificed their own worldly prospects<sup>1</sup> and were ready to sacrifice their lives also in the cause they represented; that they believed themselves entitled to exercise all the license permitted to a soldier in war; and that their object, in general, was not to destroy individual foreigners so much as to create a situation

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 33.

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inconsistent with friendly intercourse and fatal to the maintenance of the *Shōgun's* administration. A favourite saying of Ando, who succeeded the great *Tairō*, Ii, was: "If the *rōnin*<sup>1</sup> thirst so ardently for blood, let them take my life, or the *Shōgun's*, but let them never raise their hand against a foreigner, for they would thus endanger the national safety." It is possible that these words, profoundly wise as they were, furnished a cue to the *rōnin*. Whatever the *Shōgun's* chief minister denounced as eminently objectionable, that commended itself most to these desperate patriots. No clearer exposition of the motives animating them can be found than that furnished by documents from the hands of the men who slew the *Tairō* Ii. These last testaments<sup>2</sup> teach that their writers did not distinguish between the peaceful coming of foreign traders under a treaty of amity and an invasion of enemies from abroad. They recalled the fact that their country's wisest statesmen, after full experience of foreign intercourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had seen no alternative but to prohibit it completely. They were not without some knowledge of Western history. They knew that the great States of Europe constantly grew greater by swallowing smaller States, and they feared that the fate of the latter might overtake Japan. They believed that steadfast faith in the *Shintō* deities, supplemented by the stout arms

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 34.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, note 35.



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of the *samurai*, was the country's best bulwark, and they deemed that to permit the preaching of alien creeds was to forfeit the protection of the gods, who had always guarded Japan. They were not bigoted conservatives: they admitted that a nation's policy must change with the times; but they failed to understand the changes which the *Shōgun's* policy had undergone — at one moment ordering the feudatories to prepare for the forcible exclusion of foreigners; the next, admitting Americans even to the precincts of Yedo Castle and treating them with deference and courtesy in defiance of the Emperor's expressed wishes. They accused the Yedo Government of bribing high officials in Kyōtō, — a charge which could not be denied. They spoke of the Emperor's having passed seven days in prayer at the shrine of Iwashimizu, and of His Majesty's having finally decided, under the inspiration of the gods, that no new port should be opened, no foreigner allowed to reside in the country, and no Christian place of worship erected; and they declared their conviction that posterity would execrate them as cowards if they did not strike for their country's cause at this crisis of her destiny. It is beyond question that thousands of Japanese *samurai* entertained similar views; and when it is remembered that the ethical creed of the time sanctioned assassination as a political weapon,<sup>1</sup> that no stigma attached to the assassin, and that

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 36.



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if he escaped the punishment of the law administered by the official protectors of the man he had killed, he had nothing to apprehend except the vengeance of the latter's relatives, there remains no room for surprise that the course of the passionate controversies of those days was often marked with blood. Rather, indeed, are there grounds for surprise that the public peace suffered so little disturbance under such conditions.

## Chapter VI

### *THE FALL OF THE TOKUGAWA*

**T**HUS far this record has spoken mainly of the aspect under which aliens presented themselves to Japan by the light of tradition. It is now necessary to inquire whether, on the renewal of intercourse in the nineteenth century, the alien's demeanour and doings were of such a nature as to erase or confirm the traditional impressions of the Japanese.

Looking at the facts to-day, after the lapse of forty years has furnished a true perspective, the historian is struck by the distrust that pervaded the whole attitude of foreigners towards the Japanese at the outset of renewed intercourse. The worst possible construction was generally put by the former upon the latter's acts, whether official or private. Even the Foreign Representatives, when recording the adoption of some liberal course by the Yedo Government, were wont to qualify their approval by a hope that no trickery or abuse was intended. That they had strong reason for some want of confidence is unquestionable. The Yedo Government, while

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truly willing to implement its treaty engagements, was compelled by the exigencies of domestic policy to simulate an attitude of unwillingness; and many of the *samurai*, honestly solicitous for the national safety, endeavoured to restore the traditional isolation by throwing obstacles in the path of smooth intercourse, and by acts of violence against the persons and property of foreigners. Such conditions were not calculated to inspire trustfulness. But it must be admitted that there was little inclination to be trustful. The Foreign Representatives and foreigners in general seem to have approached the discussion of Japanese problems with all the Occidental's habitual suspicion of everything Oriental. It will readily be conceived, for example, that after the assassination of the *Tairō*, Ii, no little concern was felt by the Yedo Government. They perceived a strong probability that the desperate men who had wrought the deed, or their equally desperate comrades, might turn their swords against foreigners. The danger of such a contingency was made real by intelligence that six hundred *rōnin* had banded themselves together, and, led by the Mito *samurai*, were about to attack the foreign settlement at Kanagawa<sup>1</sup> and the Legations in Yedo. All possible precautions were at once taken by the Japanese officials. New barriers were erected, additional guards were posted, and warnings were conveyed to

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 37.

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the Foreign Representatives, accompanied with a request that, during the acute stages of the crisis, they would move abroad as little as possible. From the Japanese point of view the peril was very vivid and very disquieting. But the Foreign Ministers convinced themselves that a deliberate piece of chicanery was being practised at their expense; that statecraft rather than truth had dictated the representations made to them by the Japanese authorities, and that the alarm of the latter was simulated for the purpose of finding a pretext to curtail the liberty enjoyed by foreigners. Therefore the suggestion that the inmates of the Legations should show themselves as little as possible in the streets of the capital, where at any moment a desperado might cut them down, was treated almost as an insult. Then the Japanese authorities saw no recourse except to attach an armed escort to the person of every foreigner when he moved abroad. Even this precaution, which certainly was not adopted out of mere caprice or with any sinister design, excited fresh suspicions. The Representative of one of the Great Powers, in reporting the event to his Government, said that the Japanese had taken the opportunity to graft upon the establishment of spies, watchmen, and police officers at the several Legations, a mounted escort to accompany the members whenever they moved out.

It has been shown above — to cite another



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example of this distrust — that the question of choosing a successor to the *Shōgun* Iyesada caused a political crisis which resulted in the removal of some of the chief officials of the Yedo Court and the accession of Ii Kamon-no-Kami to power. It has further been shown that Ii was a man of singular enlightenment and liberality, and that to his fearless action were due the conclusion of the first commercial treaty and the definite inauguration of foreign intercourse. Yet, three years later, the Foreign Representatives, in a memorandum explaining the state of affairs in Japan, saw in the crisis which called Ii to office nothing but “the disgrace and removal of the men who had been engaged in the original negotiation of the treaty,” and the transfer of the administrative power to the anti-foreign party.

On January 16th, 1861, Mr. Heusken, Acting Secretary and Interpreter of the United States Legation in Yedo, was set upon and assassinated by a band of *rōnin* in a suburb of the city. Ando was then charged with the conduct of foreign affairs on behalf of the Yedo Government — the same Ando whose habitual caution was that, if the *rōnin* wanted to shed blood, they should kill him, or kill even the *Shōgun*, rather than raise their hand against foreigners. Ando's statement to Mr. Townsend Harris, the United States Representative, after the murder of Heusken was: “It is a source

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of profound regret to me that Heusken fell under the hand of lawless men, for a long work still lay before him to promote peace between Japanese and foreigners by making the latter acquainted with the truth about the former. I fear that his death means not only failure on our part to protect foreigners, but also the loss of one who was a connecting link between Japan and America. It is not his misfortune alone: it is Japan's misfortune. My sorrow is not less than yours." The sincerity of this speech was beyond all doubt. Heusken's death pained the chief officials of the *Shōgun's* Government as much as it shocked the Foreign Representatives. Yet the latter subsequently recorded their suspicion that the assassination had been contrived by the *Shōgun's* Government as part of a system of terrorism and intimidation planned with the object of driving foreigners out of Yedo.<sup>1</sup>

As a page of history read now without any of the emotions or prejudices that distorted its text at the time, this record assumes an almost comical character. The foreigner, having forced his companionship upon the unwilling Japanese, found it an insult that they should seek to protect him against the perilous consequences of his own obtrusiveness; the Yedo statesmen, grappling desperately with difficulties which seemed likely to produce a political revolution involving their

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 38.

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own destruction, saw themselves suspected of exaggerating and even manufacturing those difficulties by the very men that had caused the whole trouble; the *Shōgun's* ministers, knowing that the purpose of their enemies, the exclusionists, was to embroil them with foreigners by attacks upon the persons and properties of the latter, and having adopted all possible precautions to avert such deeds of violence, found themselves credited, not with any solicitude for the safety of the Foreign Representatives' lives, but with instituting, under plea of zeal for that safety, "a system of isolation, restriction, and petty *tracasserie*, in order to make the residence of diplomatic agents as disagreeable and hateful as possible;"<sup>1</sup> the Japanese administrators, earnestly striving to bring the nation to a sense of the necessity and advantages of foreign intercourse, saw themselves accused of having for their chief object the restriction of that intercourse, and declared to be harbouring an intention, should less violent means fail, "of bringing about a simulated popular movement in which foreign lives would be sacrificed;"<sup>1</sup> the progressive politicians, whose propaganda of inter-state commerce encountered a serious obstacle in the general discontent caused by the appreciation of prices that followed the inauguration of that commerce, found it declared by foreign diplomatists that the discontent was artificial in its source, and that it had been

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 39.



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“brought about by the direct action of the ruling classes with a view to make out their case” against international trade; the *Shōgun’s* councillors, who naturally shrunk from exposing to the gaze of strangers all the intricate, scarcely explicable, and in many respects humiliating complications of their domestic policy, were charged with “sparing no efforts to keep from the Foreign Representatives all sources of exact or reliable information,” and with “misleading and deceiving them as to the real state of things;” and, finally, Japan, seething with elements of unrest that defied the analysis even of her own statesmen, was denounced as a country “where it was difficult to obtain even a modicum of truth” because her condition could not be readily made clear to strangers ignorant of her history and out of all sympathy with her perplexities.

The reader is invited to consider this retrospect, not as reflecting injuriously on the procedure of the foreign diplomatic agents, but merely as illustrating the aspect their moods and methods presented to the Japanese. It must not be forgotten that the enigma of Japanese affairs seemed quite insolvable to foreigners in the early days; that the mysteries surrounding them were well calculated to excite suspicion; and that the murderous outrages of which they were the victims could not fail to provoke passionate resentment.

What has thus far been written applies chiefly

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 40.



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to foreign officials, diplomatic and consular, serving in Japan. It is necessary now to consider the impression conveyed to the Japanese by the incidents of foreign trade and by the behaviour of those engaged in it.

From the very outset a troublesome complication occurred in the field of commerce. In order to conduct tradal operations in a country with an altogether special monetary system such as Japan had, some arrangements were necessary with regard to tokens of exchange. The plan pursued by the Dutch at the Deshima factory in Nagasaki from the seventeenth century had been based on the weight of precious metal contained in Japanese coins, independently of their denominations, and without any attempt to bring about the circulation of foreign monetary tokens. The same system, so far as concerned weight, was adopted in 1858, but was supplemented by a provision that foreign coins should have currency in Japan. Foreign coins, the treaty said, must pass current for corresponding weights in Japanese coins of the same kind, — gold for gold, silver for silver, — and, during a period of one year after the opening of the ports, the Yedo Government was pledged to furnish to foreigners Japanese coins in exchange for foreign, equal weights being given and no discount taken for recoinage. This arrangement altogether ignored the ratio between the precious metals in the Japanese coinage

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system, and as the ratio stood at five to one, whereas the ratio then in Europe was fifteen to one, it resulted that the foreigner acquired the right of purchasing gold with silver in Japan at one-third of the former metal's silver price in the Occident. To state the facts more explicitly: the treaty enabled foreigners to buy with one hundred and twenty-five dollar-cents — or six shillings worth of silver — four Japanese silver tokens (called *bu*), which, in the Japanese coinage system, were exchangeable for a gold coin (called *koban*) intrinsically worth eighteen shillings. Of course the treaty could not have been framed with the deliberate intention of securing to foreigners such an unjust advantage. As a result, partly of long isolation and chiefly of currency debasements made to replenish the Treasury, the precious metals were not connected in Japan by the relation governing their interchangeable values in Europe, and foreign statesmen, when negotiating commercial treaties with her, cannot be supposed to have had any idea of holding her to that particular outcome of her isolation and inexperience. Indeed, the treaty did not create any explicit right of the kind, for although it provided that foreign coins should be exchangeable against Japanese, weight for weight, it contained no provision as to the denominations of Japanese coins or the ratio of the precious metals in the Japanese monetary system. The Japanese Government,

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then, seeing the country threatened with speedy exodus of all its gold, adopted an obvious remedy. It issued a new silver coin of the same denomination as the old but weighing three times as much. In short, it exercised a right which belongs to every independent nation, the right of so modifying its currency, when suddenly brought into circulation with foreign coins, as to preserve a due ratio between gold and silver, and thus prevent the former's being drained out of the country at one-third of its intrinsic value. Nevertheless this equitable view of the case did not commend itself to the men who looked to profit by the old conditions. They raised a vehement protest against what they called "a gross violation of treaty right," and "a deliberate attempt on the part of the Japanese authorities to raise the prices of all native produce two hundred per cent against the foreign purchaser." There is documentary evidence that the Foreign Representatives appreciated the difficulties of Japan's position. None the less they held her to the unfair version of her agreement. She had to revert to coins of the old standard, and though she bowed to the necessity, the result of this complication was an abiding sense of injustice on her side, and an impression on that of the foreign resident that she had dishonestly sought to evade her engagements.

The trade, then, did not recommend itself to



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the Japanese. Nor was the case of the trader much better. Testimony upon this point is furnished by a despatch of the British Representative, written to his Government at the close of 1859 :—

Looking at the indiscreet conduct, to use the mildest term, of many, if not all the foreign residents, the innumerable and almost daily recurring causes of dispute and irritation between the Japanese officials of all grades and the foreign traders, both as to the nature of the trade they enter into, and the mode in which they conduct it, open in many instances to grave objection, I cannot wonder at the existence of much ill-feeling. And when to those sources of irritation and animosity among the official classes, are added the irregularities, the violence, and the disorders, with the continued scenes of drunkenness, incidental to sea-ports where sailors from men-of-war and merchant ships are allowed to come on shore, sometimes in large numbers, I confess, so far from sharing in any sweeping conclusions to the prejudice of the Japanese, I think the rarity of retaliative acts of violence on their part is a striking testimony in their favour. . . . Our own people and the foreigners generally take care that there shall be no lack of grounds of distrust and irritation. Utterly reckless of the future; intent only on profiting if possible by the present moment to the utmost; regardless of treaties or future consequences, they are wholly engaged just now in shipping off all the gold currency of Japan. . . . Any coöperation with the diplomatic agents of their respective countries in their efforts to lay the foundations of permanent, prosperous, and mutually beneficial commerce between Japan and Western nations is out of the question.



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On the contrary, it is the merchants who, no doubt, create the most serious difficulties. It may be all very natural and what was to have been anticipated, but it is not the less embarrassing. And in estimating the difficulties to be overcome in any attempt to improve the aspect of affairs, if the ill-disguised enmity of the governing classes and the indisposition of the Executive Government to give practical effect to the treaties be classed among the first and principal of these, the unscrupulous character and dealings of foreigners who frequent the ports for the purposes of trade are only second, and scarcely inferior in importance, from the sinister character of the influence they exercise.

Of course the foreign merchant found many causes of legitimate dissatisfaction. Prominent among them was official interference in business matters. From the very earliest times the country's foreign commerce had been subject to close and often vexatious supervision by officials. The trade with Korea had been controlled by one great family; the trade with China by another, and the trade with the Dutch factory in Nagasaki by governors whose interference tended only to hamper its growth. Even a statesman of such general breadth of view as the *Tairō*, Ii Kamon-no-Kami, entertained a rooted conviction that all goods imported from abroad should pass through official hands on their way to Japanese consumers. A tendency to act upon that conviction caused vexatious meddling with the course of com-

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merce, elicited frequent complaints from foreigners, and helped to confirm their rooted suspicion that the Government sought to place every possible obstacle in their way, with the ultimate object of inducing them to turn their backs upon Japan, as the first English colonists had turned their backs on it early in the seventeenth century. In short, all the circumstances of Japan's renewed intercourse with foreign nations tended to accentuate the traditional conservatism of one side and the racial prejudice of the other.

The death of the Prince of Mito, which took place in the autumn of 1860, gave another blow to the already frail fabric of the *Shōgun's* Government, for although this remarkable nobleman had acted a part inimical to the Yedo Court, his influence upon the turbulent *samurai* had been wholesome. He had succeeded in restraining them from acts of violence, especially against the persons of foreigners, and when his powerful hand was withdrawn, the situation became more uncontrollable, and the lives and properties of foreigners began to be exposed to frequent perils. A brief gleam of sunshine fell upon the *Shōgun's* cause when he received the Emperor's sister in marriage in 1861. But in order to effect this union of the two Courts, the Yedo statesmen had fresh recourse to their dangerous policy of duplicity and temporising; they pledged themselves to comply with the

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wishes of the Kyōtō conservatives by expelling foreigners from Japan within ten years. The embarrassments resulting from such a promise were more than sufficient to counterbalance any advantage that might have accrued from the reconciliation of the two Courts, and a further element of unrest was created by a widely entertained suspicion that the marriage represented the beginning of a plot to dethrone the Emperor. In truth, the situation was rapidly assuming a character that defied the feeble adjustments and compromises of the *Shōgun's* ministers. Kyōtō became the centre of disaffection. Thither flocked not only the genuinely anti-foreign agitators — the “barbarian expelling party” (*jōi-tō*), as they were called, — but also the leaders of a much more formidable movement, which, having for its prime object the overthrow of the Shogunate, saw in the anti-foreign commotion an instrument capable of being utilised to that end. It would be an error to conclude that the promoters of the anti-*Shōgun* agitation were actuated solely by an intelligent perception of the evils of the dual system of government. Many of them assuredly detected its nationally weakening effects, their appreciation of that point having been quickened by a sense of the country's helplessness to resist the advent of foreigners. But the ruling motives with a large number were restless desire of change and hostility to

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the Yedo Court. The continuous monopoly of administrative power during nearly three centuries by a small section of the nation had naturally educated the former feeling; and as for the latter, it was entertained partly by men disgusted with the feeble, vacillating methods of the Shogunate in recent times, and partly by men who had been driven from office or otherwise punished in connection with the vicissitudes of the era and with the Yedo Court's frequent changes of policy. On the whole, the enemies of the Shogunate were much more numerous and influential than the enemies of foreign intercourse, though both united in the "barbarian expelling" clamour,—these from sentiment, those from expediency.

Murderous attacks upon foreigners now became frequent; a party of *samurai* proceeded to Yokohama and threatened with death any Japanese merchant doing business with aliens, and a doctrine was propounded in Kyōtō that the *Shōgun's* title — *Sei-i*, or "barbarian expelling" — pointed plainly to the expulsion of foreigners, and convicted him of failure of duty in admitting them to any part of Japan. It need scarcely be said that the title had no such significance. Devised originally with reference to the subjugation of the uncivilised aborigines of Japan, it had never been applied to foreigners, and could not possibly have been applied to them, seeing that its first bestowal had long antedated the oc-



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currence of foreign complications. So crushed, however, was the spirit of the Yedo officials that instead of stoutly repudiating this extravagant interpretation of their Prince's title, they advised him to apologise for his failure to discharge the duty it indicated; and they carried their placating system to the length of removing from the governing body any ministers disapproved by the Kyōtō Court.

Throughout all their temporising simulations of anti-foreign purpose, the *Shōgun's* advisers placed their trust in time. They believed that before the necessity arose to give practical effect to their pretended policy, some method of evasion would present itself. But the Kyōtō conservatives resolved to defeat that scheme of procedure. They induced the Emperor to issue an edict in which, after alluding to the "insufferable and contumelious behaviour of foreigners, to the loss of prestige and honour constantly menacing the country," and to the sovereign's "profound solicitude," His Majesty openly announced the *Shōgun's* promise to make full preparations for expelling foreigners within ten years, and declared that, in order to secure the unity required for achieving that purpose, an Imperial Princess had been given to the *Shōgun* in marriage. This edict was in effect a commission warranting every Japanese subject to organise an anti-foreign campaign. It publicly committed the Yedo Court to a policy which the latter had neither power

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to carry out nor any real intention of attempting to carry out.

The two most powerful fiefs of Japan at this epoch were Satsuma and Chōshiu. Satsuma, owing to its remote position at the extreme south of the Japanese Empire, had never been brought within the effective sphere of the Yedo Court's administrative control. Chōshiu, though less remote, was somewhat similarly circumstanced, and both had strong hereditary reasons for hostility to the Tokugawa Shogunate. These two clans were permeated with a spirit of unrest and disaffection. There were differences, however. In Chōshiu the anti-foreign feeling dominated the anti-Tokugawa, and the whole clan, lord and vassal alike, were convinced that loyalty to the Throne could not be reconciled with a liberal attitude towards foreign intercourse. In Satsuma the prevailing sentiment was anti-Tokugawa, the "barbarian-expulsion" cry being regarded as a collateral issue only. But as yet the Satsuma *samurai* had not openly associated themselves with either the anti-foreign or the anti-Tokugawa movement, nor had they given any evidence of the ambition that undoubtedly swayed them, the ambition of occupying a prominent place in a newly organised national polity. On the contrary, their chief, Shimazu Samuro, and his principal advisers maintained a neutral attitude toward the question of foreign intercourse, and were disposed to befriend the Shogunate, though the bulk

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of the clansmen would have gladly seen the administrative power wrested from the hands of the Yedo Court.

In Kyōtō a corresponding difference of opinion began to declare itself. The clamour and turbulence of the anti-foreign party produced a reaction, which strengthened the hands of the men by whom the marriage between the *Shōgun* and the Emperor's sister had been promoted. Two factions, therefore, gradually assumed distinct shape: the extremists, led by Princes Arisugawa and Sanjo, who advocated immediate expulsion of foreigners and overthrow of the Shogunate; the moderates, led by Princes Shishi-o, Konoye, and Iwakura, who urged less drastic measures with regard to foreigners and favoured the maintenance of the *Shōgun's* administration. To the first of these factions the Chōshiu men naturally attached themselves; to the second the Satsuma leaders. It had been generally supposed that the Satsuma chief would place himself at the head of the extremists. But his accession to the ranks of the moderates gave the ascendancy at once to the latter. They utilised it to contrive that an envoy should be sent to Yedo with an Imperial rescript indicating three courses of which the *Shōgun* was invited to choose one; namely, first, that the *Shōgun* himself should repair to Kyōtō, and there hold a conference with the principal feudatories as to the best method of securing national tranquillity; secondly, that the five prin-



cial feudatories who possessed littoral fiefs should be charged with the responsibility of coast defence, as had been done in the time of the *Taikō*; and thirdly, that Prince Keiki and the feudal chief of Echizen should be appointed to high office in the Yedo administration.

The Yedo Court was thus confronted by the most serious crisis that had yet menaced its autocracy. Not only were the feudatories openly violating the fundamental law of the Tokugawa, — the law which strictly vetoed all intercourse between them and the Imperial Court, — but, further, the *Shōgun* was required to accept Kyōtō's dictation in important matters of administration. To obey the Imperial mandate would be practical surrender of governing power; to disobey it would put a deadly weapon into the hands of the extremists. Reason suggested immediate surrender of the executive functions to the sovereign, on the ground that their efficient discharge under a system of divided authority was impossible, and it is not improbable that a courageous course of that kind would have rehabilitated the Shogunate, for the Kyōtō Court could not have ventured to accept the responsibility thus suddenly thrust upon it.

But the *Shōgun's* advisers failed to grasp the significance of the crisis. No policy suggested itself to them except one of craven complaisance. They signified their intention of complying with the first and third of the Emperor's conditions,



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and they carried submissiveness to the length of punishing many of their ablest officials and staunchest partisans on the ground that the serenity of the Imperial mind had been disturbed by their procedure. Historians indicate the year 1867 as the date of the fall of the Shogunate, because the administrative power was then finally restored to the Emperor. But it may be asserted with greater accuracy that the Shogunate fell in the year 1862, when the Yedo Court made the radical surrender here indicated. Nor was that the only mistake. The *Shōgun's* ministers, underestimating the value of the Satsuma chief's friendship, paid no attention to his advice, nor took any care to strengthen his good disposition by courteous treatment. He recommended that the *Shōgun* should decline to proceed to Kyōtō, and should reject all proposals pointing to the expulsion of foreigners; but the Yedo Court neither heeded his counsel nor showed towards him the same consideration that they had displayed to the Chōshiu chief, with whom his relations were notoriously strained.

It was thus with feelings considerably estranged that the Satsuma chief set out on his return journey to Kyōtō. On the way an incident happened which was destined to have far-reaching consequence. A party of British subjects, three gentlemen and a lady, persisted in an attempt to ride through the Satsuma chief's cortège, ignorant that the custom of the country

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prescribed death as the penalty for such an act. *Samurai* of the body-guard drew their swords, killed one of the Englishmen (Mr. Richardson), and wounded the two others, the lady alone escaping unhurt.<sup>1</sup> Probably no incident of that troublous era excited more indignation at the time or was more discussed subsequently. But while a custom so inhuman as that obeyed by the Satsuma *samurai* merits execration, the fact must not be forgotten that to any Japanese behaving as these English people behaved, the same fate would have been meted out in an even more summary manner. For the rest, the outrage differed essentially from those of which foreigners had previously been victims, inasmuch as it was in no sense inspired by the "barbarian expelling" sentiment. Nevertheless, the immediate consequence was that since Satsuma refused to surrender the implicated *samurai*, and since the *Shōgun's* arm was not long enough to reach this powerful feudatory, the British Government sent a squadron to bombard his capital, Kago-shima. The remote and most important consequence was that the belligerent operations of the British ships effectually convinced the Satsuma *samurai* of the hopelessness of resisting foreign intercourse by force, and converted them into advocates of liberal progress towards which their previous attitude had been at best neutral.

Meanwhile the Yedo Court was steadily pur-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 41.

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suing its suicidal policy. Under the influence of the new advisers whom, in compliance with its pledge to Kyōtō, it had summoned to preside at its councils, measures were taken that could serve only to weaken its authority. Many of the time-honoured forms and ceremonies which contributed to lend dignity to official procedure and held a high place in popular esteem for the sake of their spectacular effect, were abolished, or curtailed, on grounds of economy, and for the same reason the rule was greatly relaxed which required the feudatories to live in Yedo every second year and to leave their families there in alternate years. This law had been one of the strongest buttresses of the *Shōgun's* power. It was abrogated precisely at the moment when the feudatories were disposed to abuse every access of liberty.

Nor did the almost abject submissiveness of the Yedo statesmen have the effect of appeasing their enemies. On the contrary, the extremists in Kyōtō were so emboldened by these evidences of weakness that, without waiting for the *Shōgun* to fulfil his promise of proceeding to Kyōtō, they obtained from the Emperor a new edict requiring the Yedo Court to announce to all the feudatories the definite adoption of the "alien-expelling" policy, and further directing that a date for the practical inception of that policy be fixed and communicated to the Throne. A few months previously it had been commanded that



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the *Shōgun* should come to Kyōtō to discuss the question of the nation's attitude towards foreigners; now he was directed to accept an undiscussed policy, proclaim it, and give a promise as to the time for putting it into execution.

Even to be thus flouted did not provoke the Yedo statesmen to adopt a manly and dignified course. Instead of protesting against the second edict and declining to receive it, they duly acknowledged it, and promised that its contents should be debated when the *Shōgun* reached Kyōtō.

In the early spring of 1863 the *Shōgun* set out for the Imperial city. As his cortège passed along the seashore near Kanagawa, he could see a strong squadron of British war-vessels assembled in Yokohama harbour. Being a mere boy, he probably gave himself no concern about the purpose of these vessels' presence, nor was he told that they were a demonstration to obtain from his own Government redress for the assassination committed by the Satsuma *samurai*, or that he himself would have travelled by sea had not his ministers apprehended the seizure of his person by the British ships. Fate could scarcely have been more ironical than she was when she contrived that the *Shōgun* should be cited to Kyōtō to answer for not driving out intruders by whom his own capital was openly menaced and his own movements were restricted.

This journey to Kyōtō was not undertaken in



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accordance with any definite policy. Even the course to be pursued on arrival there had not been mapped out. The *Shōgun's* ministers consoled themselves with vague hopes: they trusted to the chapter of accidents. Very different was the conduct of the extremists. By methods little short of intimidation, they extorted from Prince Keiki, the *Shōgun's* guardian, who was then in Kyōtō, a promise that immediately on the *Shōgun's* return to Yedo, measures to terminate foreign intercourse should be commenced. They even required a pledge as to the number of days to be spent by the *Shōgun* in Kyōtō and on his journey back to Yedo. These engagements confronted the *Shōgun* when he reached the Imperial capital. From the position of an autocrat, he had fallen to that of a mere subordinate. Instead of issuing orders, it had become his duty to receive and obey them. For the moment the extremists, under the leadership of Mori, chief of Chōshiu, had command of the situation. Though headed by such men as Princes Konoye (the Regent), Iwakura, and Chigusa, and the feudal chiefs of Echizen, Aizu, and Tosa, the moderates could not make head against the tide in the absence of Shimazu of Satsuma, whom the Tōkaidō assassination (described above) had compelled to return to his fief. Slights and even insults were conspicuous in the treatment accorded to the *Shōgun* at the Imperial Court.<sup>1</sup> From Yedo, at the same

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 42.

time, couriers arrived almost daily, urging that unless the *Shōgun* returned at once to settle the complication with the British, war could not be avoided. The extremists welcomed the prospect. Nothing could have suited them better than that a British fleet should demolish the last vestiges of the Yedo administration. They have just been seen stipulating that the *Shōgun* should return to his capital within a fixed number of days for the purpose of expelling foreigners. But now that there was a prospect of his destruction being furthered by holding him in Kyōtō, they held him there. An Imperial decree was published directing that if the "English barbarians" wanted a conference, they should be invited to repair to Osaka harbour, there to receive a point-blank refusal; that the *Shōgun* should remain in Kyōtō to assume the direction of defensive operations, and that he should accompany the Emperor to the shrine of the God of War, where a "barbarian-quelling sword" would be handed to him.

Under such circumstances, the *Shōgun* had recourse to the last refuge of the helpless: he fell sick; and Yedo, being thus left to its own resources, chose the only practicable route, paid the indemnity demanded for the Richardson murder, and left the British to exact from Satsuma whatever further redress they deemed necessary. This the British did so effectually, in July (1863), that all idea of measuring strength with the Occident disappeared completely from

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the minds of the Satsuma *samurai*, and their chief, Shimazu, already imbued with moderate views, now finally adopted the resolution of opposing the anti-foreign extremists with his entire strength.

But in the mean while several important events had occurred.

Among the various edicts obtained from the sovereign by the extremists, there was one which fixed the 11th of May, 1863, as the date for practically inaugurating the anti-foreign policy. Copies of this edict were distributed among the feudatories, without the intervention of the *Shōgun*, a course flagrantly opposed to administrative precedents. The Chōshiu chief alone rendered immediate obedience. In fact his zeal outran his orders, for without awaiting the appointed day, he opened fire on foreign vessels passing through the strait of Shimonoseki, which his batteries commanded. Ships flying the flags of the United States, of France, and of Holland having been thus treated, vigorous remonstrances were addressed to the Yedo Government by the representatives of those three Powers.

Meanwhile, the *Shōgun's* ministers in Yedo, observing that their master was detained in Kyōtō against his will, and that, unless a bold stroke were struck, his authority must be permanently impaired, sent two battalions of picked *samurai* by sea to Osaka, and marched them to the im-

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mediate vicinity of Kyōtō. Such a display of wellnigh reckless resolution on the part of statesmen who had hitherto shown themselves submissive almost to pusillanimity, astounded the public. Had the troops been allowed to enter the city, the extremists could not have made any effective resistance. But the *Shōgun's* officials in Kyōtō persuaded the *samurai* to retire. The opportunity was lost, and nothing resulted from this bold move except the *Shōgun's* speedy return to Yedo.

The extremists now had full mastery of the situation in Kyōtō. It seemed that nothing could check them. Yet at this moment of apparent supremacy, their cause received a blow from which it never recovered. They had the audacity to forge an Imperial edict, declaring the Emperor's firm resolve to drive out the barbarians, and announcing that His Majesty would make a pilgrimage to the great shrines to pray for success. They doubtless imagined that their influence at Court would enable them to secure the Emperor's *post-facto* endorsement of this edict. But they were mistaken. At the instance of the moderates, an order was issued that Mori of Chōshiu, leader of the extremists, should withdraw from the capital with all his vassals and with the nobles who had supported his views.

The only credible explanation of this marked change of attitude in Kyōtō was that the bom-



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bardment of Kagoshima by a British squadron had furnished a conclusive proof of Japan's helplessness to stand in arms against foreigners. It is true that the Court did not openly disavow its anti-foreign policy; but it never again attempted to enforce it. Shimazu of Satsuma was summoned to Kyōtō, and at his instance the *Shōgun* repaired thither again, receiving now a gracious welcome and finding an opportunity which might have been utilised to put an end for ever to anti-foreign agitation and to restore the administrative authority of Yedo. His advisers, however, seemed in those days to be entirely without capacity to take a wise step. They saw no course except to continue their simulated arrangements for terminating foreign intercourse, though public opinion had evidently begun to change towards that problem.

Two events now occurred which finally deprived the anti-foreign movement of all mischievous power. The Chōshiu *samurai*, seeking to recover their influence by force, made a raid against Kyōtō, and were not driven back until a large section of the city had been destroyed by fire. Their alleged object was to present a petition to the Throne; but their real and well-understood purpose was to destroy the leaders of the moderates. This attempt and its signal failure not only involved the national disgrace of the Chōshiu men, but also discredited the cause they espoused. The Emperor had previ-

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ously been regarded as the leader of the anti-foreign policy, but its most vehement advocates now began to be classed as rebels. Shortly afterwards, the three Powers whose merchantmen had been fired on by the Shimo-no-seki batteries, together with England, sent a joint squadron which demolished Chōshiu's forts, destroyed his ships, and without any apparent effort scattered his fighting men. This "Shimo-no-seki expedition," the theme of endless discussion<sup>1</sup> in later times, had for direct result a national conviction that to resist foreigners by force was quite hopeless; and for indirect, an universal inference that the Shogunate instead of wielding the power of the country, constituted a fatal obstacle to national unity. Of all the factors that operated to draw Japan from her seclusion and to overthrow feudalism, the most powerful were the shedding of Richardson's blood at Namamugi on the Tokaidō, and the resulting "Kagoshima expedition," the shelling of foreign vessels by Chōshiu's forts at Shimo-no-seki, and the abortive attempt of the Chōshiu *samurai* to recover their influence in Kyōtō, by force. The year 1863 saw the "barbarian expelling" agitation deprived of the Emperor's sanction; the two principal clans, Satsuma and Chōshiu, convinced of their country's impotence to defy the Occident; the nation almost fully roused to a sense of the disintegrating and weakening effects

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 43.

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of the feudal system ; and the traditional antipathy to foreigners beginning to be exchanged for a desire to study their civilisation and to adopt its best features.

As for the Shogunate, evil fortune continued to attend all its doings. It began to be a house divided against itself. Its Yedo officials conceived a strong distrust of their Kyōtō colleagues, and even of the Satsuma chief, Shimazu Samuro, whose influence had hitherto been loyally exerted in the *Shōgun's* cause. The consequences of this discord were speedily apparent. When the Chōshiu batteries began to fire upon foreign vessels navigating the Shimo-no-seki Strait, a commissioner was sent from Yedo to remonstrate against such lawless action. The Chōshiu folk replied that they were obeying the sovereign's orders, which did not concern the *Shōgun*, and they capped their contumacy by killing the commissioner. A military expedition then became inevitable. Thirty-six feudatories furnished contingents, and an overwhelming force moved against the rebellious noble. The Chōshiu chief made no resistance. He took steps to prove his contrition, and then appealed to the clemency of the invading generals, who justified his confidence by leaving him in undisturbed possession of his fief and withdrawing their forces unconditionally. Intelligence of these doings provoked much indignation among the Yedo statesmen. They concluded that such leniency must have been

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inspired by a treacherous purpose on the part of the Kyōtō officials who had endorsed it, and on the part of the Satsuma chief whose troops formed a large part of the expeditionary force. Preparations were therefore made for a second attack upon Chōshiu, the *Shōgun* himself leading his army. It was confidently believed that the rebellious clan would submit without a struggle, and that the expedition would be nothing more than a pleasant picnic. Possibly that forecast would have proved correct had a semblance of earnestness been imparted to the operations. But the army of invasion halted at Osaka and envoys were sent to pronounce sentence upon Chōshiu. These proceedings soon assumed a farcical aspect. On the one side, penal proclamations were solemnly addressed to the offending clan; on the other, the clan paid not the smallest attention to them. A swift, strong blow was essential. The *Shōgun* could have delivered it and the Chōshiu men could not then have resisted it in the immediate sequel of their defeat by a foreign squadron. But the *Shōgun* hesitated, and in the meanwhile the proximate cause of all his troubles became again active.

Great Britain happened to be represented at that time in Japan by Sir Harry Parkes, a man of exceptional perspicacity and of military methods. He foresaw that the days of the Yedo Court were numbered; he believed that the interests of his own country as well as those of



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Japan would be furthered by the Emperor's resumption of administrative power; and the abundant energy of his disposition made it difficult for him to trust the consummation of these things to the slow processes of time. The Emperor had not yet ratified the treaties. They were understood to have his sanction, but the diplomatic formality of ratification was still wanting. Further, it appeared eminently desirable from the British merchant's point of view that the import duties fixed by the treaties should be reduced from an average of fifteen per cent *ad valorem* to five per cent, and that the ports of Hyōgō and Osaka should be opened at once to foreign trade, instead of nearly two years hence, as originally agreed. Now the *Shōgun* owed a sum of two million dollars to the four Powers which had undertaken the Shimo-no-seki expedition. They had imposed a fine of three million dollars on Chōshiu, and the Yedo Government had undertaken to pay the money. Two millions were still due. It occurred to Sir Harry Parkes that a good bargain might be struck by offering to forego this debt of two millions in exchange for the ratification of the treaties, the reduction of the tariff, and the speedy opening of Hyōgō and Osaka. The proposition, being in the nature of a peaceful offer, might have been preferred without the coöperation of war-ships. But Sir Harry Parkes had learned to think that a display of force should occupy the fore-

ground in all negotiations with Oriental States, and he possessed the faculty of persuading himself that a naval demonstration might be represented to the European public as a perfectly friendly prelude to a conference. He got together a fleet of British, French, and Dutch men-of-war, and sailed with them to Hyōgō for the purpose of setting forth his project of amicable exchange.

It will be remembered that the two crucial stages of the early treaty negotiations were the passage of foreign vessels into the Bay of Kanagawa and the admission of an American Envoy to the *Shōgun's* capital. Hyōgō stood in the same relation to the imperial city of Kyōtō that Kanagawa occupied towards Yedo. The arrival of a foreign squadron at Hyōgō could not fail to disturb the nation even more than the apparition of Commodore Perry's vessels at Kanagawa had disturbed the *Shōgun's* officials. Thus, when eight foreign war-ships cast anchor off Hyōgō in November, 1866, and when the Foreign Representatives, speaking from out of the shadow of fifty cannon, set forth the details of their "friendly" exchange, all the troubles of foreign intercourse seemed to have been revived in an aggravated form. Here were the "barbarians" at the very portals of the Imperial Palace, and it did not occur to any one to suppose that such pomp and parade of instruments of war had been prepared for the mere amusement of

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Japanese sightseers, or that a refusal of the amicable bargain proposed in such terms would be followed by the quiet withdrawal of the menacing squadron, which, as the Japanese had fully learned at Kagoshima and Shimo-no-seki, could raze their towns and shatter their ships with the utmost ease. Chōshiu rebels and all other domestic troubles were forgotten in the presence of this peril. The anti-foreign agitators, who had been virtually reduced to silence, raised their voices again in loud denunciation of the *Shōgun's* incompetence to preserve the precincts of the sacred city from such trespasses. The Emperor himself shared the general alarm, and in a moment the Shogunate was confronted by a crisis of the gravest nature. A resolute attitude towards either the Imperial Court or the foreigners could alone have saved the situation. But the *Shōgun's* ministers pursued their usual temporising tactics. They sought to placate the Foreign Representatives by half-promises, and they urged the Imperial Court to concede something.

The Emperor, brought once more under the influence of the anti-foreign party, took an extraordinary step at this stage. He dismissed from office and otherwise punished the ministers to whom the *Shōgun* had entrusted the conduct of the negotiations with the Foreign Representatives. That was an open violation of the Yedo Government's administrative rights. Noth-



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ing remained for the *Shōgun* except to resign. He adopted that course, submitting to the sovereign two addresses; in one of which Prince Keiki was recommended as his successor; in the other, the necessity of ratifying the treaties was set forth in strong terms. The Court, however, shrank from the responsibilities involved in accepting this resignation. Answer was made to the *Shōgun* that the treaties had the Imperial assent and that the *Shōgun* was empowered to deal with them, but that since they contained many objectionable provisions, steps must be taken to revise them, after consultation with the feudatories, and that, under no circumstances, should Hyōgō and Osaka be opened. It was an impracticable compromise, but the *Shōgun* lacked courage to reject it. His ministers conceded the tariff changes proposed by the Foreign Representatives and further promised that Hyōgō would be opened speedily. The Representatives therefore sailed away with a pleasant consciousness of success. They had come in their war-ships to propose a friendly exchange, the conditions being that in return for remitting two million dollars of an indemnity excessive from the outset they should obtain three important concessions. They went away having obtained two of the concessions and without having remitted a dollar of the indemnity.

The *Shōgun* was now free to prosecute his



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interrupted expedition against Chōshiu. But the opportunity to carry it to a successful issue no longer existed. The Chōshiu men had found time to organise their defences, and to receive a large accession of strength from quarters permeated with dissatisfaction against the Yedo Government. Every operation undertaken by the *Shōgun's* adherents ended in failure, and the Chōshiu *samurai* found themselves in a position to assume the offensive.

While the nation was watching this display of impotence and drawing conclusions fatal to the prestige of the Yedo Government, the *Shōgun* died and was succeeded by Prince Keiki (1866).

It has been shown that Prince Keiki was put forward by the anti-foreign conservatives as candidate for the succession to the *Shōgun's* office in 1857, when the complications of foreign intercourse were in their first stage of acuteness. Yet no sooner did he become *Shōgun* in 1866 than he remodelled the army on French lines, engaged English officers to organise a navy, sent his brother to the Paris Exposition, and altered many of the forms and ceremonies of his Court so as to bring them into accord with Occidental fashions. This contrast between the politics he represented when a candidate for office and the practice he adopted on succeeding to power nine years later, furnished an apt illustration

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of the change that had come over the spirit of the time. The most bigoted of the exclusionists were now beginning to abandon all idea of at once expelling foreigners and to think mainly of acquiring the best elements of their civilisation.

Pressing for immediate settlement when Keiki became *Shōgun* were two questions, the trouble with Chōshiu and the opening of Hyōgō to foreign trade. In the eyes of the great majority of the feudatories, notably the Satsuma chief, the former problem was the more important; in the eyes of the *Shōgun*, the latter. Twice the Emperor was memorialised in urgent terms to sanction the convention providing for the opening of Hyōgō at the beginning of 1868, and at length he reluctantly consented. At the same time an edict was obtained imposing severe penalties on Chōshiu. The former provoked a fresh ebullition among the anti-foreign politicians; the latter had a result still more disastrous to the Tokugawa, for it united against them the great clans of Satsuma and Chōshiu.

This is one of the turning-points of Japan's modern history. A few words are needed to make it intelligible.

In spite of the generally hostile sentiments entertained towards each other by the Satsuma and Chōshiu clans, each comprised a number of exceptionally gifted men whose ambition was to join the forces of the two fiefs for the purpose of

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unifying the Empire under the rule of the Kyōtō Court. Prominent among these reformers on the Satsuma side were Saigo and Okubo, while on the Chōshiu side were Kido and Sanjo, — all four destined to play great parts in the drama of their country's new career. Saigo and Okubo, in common with the bulk of the Satsuma *samurai*, entertained, at the outset, strongly conservative ideas with regard to foreign intercourse, but such views, as has been shown, were not shared by the Satsuma chief and his principal vassals. The Satsuma leaders, in fact, tended to liberalism. Chōshiu, on the contrary, was permeated by anti-foreign prejudice. Hence anything like hearty coalition between the two clans seemed impossible, and the breach grew wider after 1863; for the bombardment of Kagoshima by a British squadron in that year having finally convinced all classes in Satsuma of the hopelessness of resisting foreign intercourse, they made no secret of their progressive principles, and were consequently regarded as unpatriotic renegades by the Chōshiu *samurai*. Events accentuated the difference. The Chōshiu batteries in 1863 fired on and destroyed a Satsuma steamer laden with cotton for foreign markets; the Satsuma men took a leading part in resisting Chōshiu's attempt to re-enter Kyōtō in 1864. Nothing seemed less likely than a union of such hostile elements. But Chōshiu's turn to receive a convincing object lesson came in 1865, when a foreign fleet attacked



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Shimo-no-seki and demonstrated Japanese helplessness to resist Western weapons. At the same time two youths of the Chōshiu clan, Itō and Inouye,<sup>1</sup> returning from England, whither they had been sent to study means of expelling foreigners, began to propagate vigorously among their clansmen the liberal convictions acquired on their travels. Chōshiu, in short, was converted, as Satsuma had already been, and the advocates of national unification found at length an opportunity to bring the two clans together. They could not have succeeded, however, in engaging Satsuma to espouse any scheme hostile to the Tokugawa had not the latter's leading officials alienated the Satsuma chief, first by a display of groundless suspicion, and afterwards by deciding to send a second expedition against Chōshiu, although Satsuma had been one of the leaders of the former expedition and had endorsed its results. These things had gradually cooled Satsuma's friendship towards the Yedo Court, and when, in 1867, the *Shōgun* Keiki obtained a rescript authorising the severe punishment of Chōshiu, Satsuma secretly entered into an alliance with the latter. Capital as the incident was, its importance escaped the knowledge of the Yedo Court. But the *Shōgun* soon had ample evidence that among all the feudatories he could no longer count certainly upon the loyalty of more than three or four, the whole of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 44.



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the rest having been estranged either by his treatment of the Chōshiu question or by his radical innovations.

It was at this juncture that Yōdō, chief of Tosa, a clan scarcely less important than either Satsuma or Chōshiu, addressed to the *Shōgun* a remarkable memorial, setting forth the helplessness of the position in which the Yedo Court now found itself, and urging that, in the interests of good government and in order that the nation's united strength might be available to meet the contingencies of its new career, the administrative power should be restored to the Emperor. Yōdō was one of the great men of his time. Reference has been frequently made in these pages to the action taken or the attitude assumed by the "feudatories" at such and such a juncture. But it must be noted that the feudatories themselves — in other words, the feudal chiefs — exercised little influence on the current of events in Tokugawa days. From the *Shōgun* downward, the nobles were enervated, incompetent, and often semi-imbecile individuals, educated in such a manner as to be without perception of the world of men and things, and sedulously taught to indulge their sensuous proclivities at the sacrifice of every useful capacity or wholesome impulse. There were exceptions, of course. Nariaki and Rekkō of Mito, Shimazu Samuro of Satsuma, Shungaku of Yechizen, Kanso of Nabeshima,

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and Yōdō of Tosa deservedly rank among the illustrious statesmen that prepared the way for the radical change of later days, or took an active part in promoting it. But it would be most erroneous to suppose that the Revolution of 1867 and all the reforms growing out of it were conceived, initiated, or furthered by the feudal chiefs. Among their immediate authors and promoters, numbering in all about threescore, not more than half a dozen names of great territorial magnates are to be found, and even these half-dozen acted a subordinate part. The makers of new Japan were *samurai* of comparatively low rank, men of extraordinary courage and almost reckless daring; swayed by a passionate desire to see their country take an honourable place among the nations, but not uninfluenced by motives of personal ambition and not hampered by hostages already given to fortune. The only sense in which the nobility can be said to have assisted the Revolution was that their intellectual helplessness rendered them practically indifferent to their own selfish interests, and thus prevented them from opposing changes which certainly did not make for their advantage. Yōdō of Tosa belonged to the very small minority of feudal chiefs who saw clearly whither events were tending; yet he, too, owed much of his progressive ideas to the influence of ardent young reformers among his vassals.

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The Tosa memorial, carried to Kyōtō by Goto and Fukuoka,<sup>1</sup> gave definite form to a conviction which had already begun to present itself vaguely to the intelligence of the *Shōgun*. He summoned a council of all the feudatories and high officials then in Kyōtō, announced to them his decision, and, the next day, presented his resignation to the Emperor.

This happened on the 14th of October, 1867. It must be ranked among the signal events of the world's history. During nearly three centuries the Tokugawa had wielded supreme administrative authority in Japan, holding in Yedo a Court which lacked no attribute of stately magnificence or autocratic strength. It is not the custom of humanity to voluntarily surrender the highest prizes attainable by brilliant statesmanship and military genius. No reason can be found, however, to doubt that Keiki's resignation was tendered in good faith, or that, had it been accepted in the same spirit, the great changes it suggested would have been consummated without bloodshed or disorder. But the clansmen of the south distrusted the *Shōgun's* intention. A similar act on the part of his predecessor had resulted in restoring the autocratic power of the Yedo Court. They resolved, therefore, to give such prompt and decisive effect to Keiki's offer that the possibility of its withdrawal should be completely obviated. The

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 45

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Emperor being then only fifteen years of age, Imperial edicts were easily obtained by those having friends at Court. Secretly there was issued to Satsuma and Chōshiu the following rescript:—

Inasmuch as Minamoto Keiki, relying on the merits of his ancestors and on the power and dignity bequeathed to him, has grown arrogant and disloyal, doing to death our good and faithful subjects and often refusing to observe our commands; and inasmuch as he did not hesitate to alter and even reverse orders issued by the late Emperor; and inasmuch as without compunction he has led the people to the edge of an awful abyss; and inasmuch as the Divine Nation, because of his crimes, is on the eve of a great disaster; now, therefore, we, who are the father and mother of our people, since we cannot choose but punish this traitor, so that the spirit of the late Emperor may be appeased and vengeance done upon the nation's worst enemy, hereby declare our will that the traitor Keiki be destroyed, and that you, to whom this command is addressed, accomplish the great deed and replace the national affairs on a firm foundation of lasting peace and glory.

The secrecy in which the *Shōgun's* enemies were able to envelop their proceedings indicates the strength of their position. Not only did the alliance between Satsuma and Chōshiu escape the observation of the Yedo authorities, but even the issue of the above edict remained unknown to the public for several years. It was a document obviously dictated by unreasoning hostility:



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none of its charges could have been substantiated, nor can any meed of disinterested patriotism be accorded to those that compiled it.

The procedure of a Court capable of framing such harsh edicts can easily be inferred. All officials connected with the Tokugawa or suspected of sympathy with them were ruthlessly expelled from office in Kyōtō, and the *Shōgun's* troops were deprived of the custody of the Palace gates by methods which verged upon the use of armed force. In the face of such provocation, Keiki's earnest efforts to restrain the indignation of his vassals and adherents failed. He was obliged to lead them against Kyōtō. One defeat, however, sufficed to restore his resolution against bloodshed. He retired to Yedo, and subsequently made unconditional surrender to the forces of his enemies, now known as the "Imperial Army." This part of the story need not detain the reader. The Yedo Court consented to lay aside its dignities and to be stripped of its administrative authority, but all the Tokugawa vassals and adherents did not prove equally placable. There was resistance in the northern provinces; there was an attempt to set up a rival candidate for the Throne in the person of an Imperial Prince who presided over the Uyeno Monastery in Yedo; and there was a wild essay on the part of the admiral of the *Shōgun's* fleet to establish a republic in the island of Yezo. But these were mere ripples on the surface of the broad stream which set towards

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the peaceful overthrow of the dual system of government and ultimately towards the fall of feudalism itself.

It will be observed that in the edict quoted above no explicit reference is made to the question of foreign intercourse. A seclusionist, reading between the lines, might have detected some covert allusion to the subject; but, at the same time, the contrast between such marked reticence and the outspoken denunciations of the previous Emperor's rescripts, must have forced itself upon the attention of every one perusing the document. The anti-*Shōgun* movement had seemed originally to derive its main force from the nation's anti-foreign mood. Yet the "alien-expelling" sentiment did not figure at all upon the stage whereon were acted the last episodes in the drama of the Shogunate's destruction. The reader has doubtless traced the gradual differentiation that took place with regard to this sentiment. On the one hand, those whose position and strength invested their judgment with serious responsibility, as the Satsuma and Chōshiu clans, had been taught by vivid object-lessons the futility of open resistance to foreign intercourse. On the other, the camp-following class, which consisted of unemployed *samurai* and ignorant adventurers without any stake in the preservation of public peace, had ceased to wield appreciable influence, though they clung tenaciously to the traditional prejudice against everything alien, and stood ready

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to sacrifice their own lives or the lives of other people in the cause of "patriotism" as they interpreted it. As for the Imperial Court, it reflected at any given time the convictions of the coterie of nobles that happened to be then paramount. Had the Emperor Kōmei lived a few years longer, it is possible that the views to which he had been committed by various edicts issued in his name while the "alien-expelling" party dominated the situation in Kyōtō, might have hampered any departure in a liberal direction. But he died early in 1867, and was succeeded by a youth of fourteen, who neither owed obligation to continuity of record nor took direct part in the management of State affairs. Seven noblemen, representing the Imperial nucleus of the anti-foreign element, had fled to Chōshiu in the immediate sequel of the intrigue of the forged rescript mentioned above, and had been effectually converted to liberalism by the events that occurred during their sojourn in the south. These men,<sup>1</sup> on their return to Kyōtō in 1867, supported the moderate policy of their former opponents, and it resulted that the Court fell completely under the sway of liberal views.

Another reason for conciliating foreigners was found in the difficulties and embarrassments that faced the organisers of the new Japanese polity. They had to unravel such troublesome domestic

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 46.



problems that they not only shrank from supplementing them by foreign complications, but were even disposed to place some reliance on the good will of Great Britain and of the United States<sup>1</sup> as a means of strengthening their position. One of the first acts of the newly organised Government was to invite the Foreign Representatives to Kyōtō, where they were received in audience by the Emperor, and shortly afterwards a decree was promulgated, announcing the sovereign's resolve to have amicable relations with foreign nations, and declaring that any Japanese subject thereafter guilty of violent behaviour towards a foreigner would not only act in opposition to the Imperial command, but also be guilty of impairing the dignity and good faith of the nation in the eyes of the Powers with which His Majesty had pledged himself to maintain friendship. A more signal reversal of the anti-foreign policy could not have been accomplished. Two years previously the appearance of foreign vessels off Hyōgō had thrown the nation into consternation and tumult lest the precincts of the sacred city of Kyōtō should be invaded by alien feet. Now, the Emperor actually invited foreigners to the Palace, and, with unprecedented condescension, allowed them to see him face to face.

Some element of abruptness must always be suggested by a signal metamorphosis of sentiment.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note 47.



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The conversion of Japan's Court and aristocracy to pro-foreign doctrines usually perplexes readers of her annals. They find its methods sudden and its motives obscure. The facts have therefore been set down here with minuteness somewhat disproportionate to the general scheme of these volumes' historical retrospect. Perhaps the most intelligible and comprehensive statement of the change is that whereas, in 1867, the nation's unique impulse was to reject foreign intercourse absolutely and unconditionally, its absorbing purpose in 1867 was to assimilate the material elements of Western civilisation as rapidly and thoroughly as possible. The ultimate bases of the two policies were preservation by isolation and protection by mimicry. But no Japanese of the liberal school admitted any idea of imitation for the sake of safety. He saw only what his country had lost by seclusion, and he thought only of employing every energy to repair the injury she had suffered and to equip her for recovering her due place among the Powers of the world. There remained, it is true, a small party still anchored to the old faith that to admit the foreigner was to welcome a plotter against the Empire's welfare. But to the principal of these conservatives the wholesome medicine of foreign travel was subsequently administered, working an effectual cure. As for the still smaller section, the men who had imagined that if they acquired the foreigner's proficiency in building and navi-

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gating ships, organising and equipping armies and manufacturing and utilising weapons of war, they might again close the treaty ports and revert to the old isolation, they soon perceived that there is no element of finality in civilisation, and that to turn their backs upon the Occident after brief acquaintance would be to fall behind it again in the race of progress and become as impotent as ever to resist alien aggression or dictation.

There will never again be in Japan, so far as human judgment can discern, any effective reaction against Occidental civilisation or Occidental intercourse. In fact, it may be asserted that from the day when the Shogunate fell, Japan ceased to be an Oriental nation. The term "Oriental" is not used here in a disparaging sense. So far as Japan is concerned, the reader of these pages knows that she possessed a civilisation of her own; a refined, elaborate, and highly developed civilisation, many phases of which suffer nothing, if indeed they do not gain, by comparison with the civilisation of the foremost Western nations. Therefore this epithet "Oriental" is employed with reference solely to the conservatism which has come to be regarded as a distinctive feature of East-Asian peoples; the conservatism that makes them cling to their old institutions, their old methods, their old laws, their old judicial procedure, their old means of communication, their old social organisations, and

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their old administrative machinery. From the trammels of such conservatism Japan shook herself finally free in 1867. The soundness of her instincts does not seem to have been impaired by long exile from international competition or by long lack of invigorating contact with foreign intellects. She knew the good when she saw it, and she chose it without racial prejudice or false shame. It is possible, of course, to set forth an imposing catalogue of achievements verifying these assertions; a catalogue of laws compiled, of judicial tribunals organised, of parliamentary institutions introduced, of railways built, of telegraphs erected, of postal services established, of industrial enterprises developed, of lines of steamers opened, of an educational system started, of a newspaper press created, and so forth. There will be occasion presently to make special allusion to some of these things. But it is not to statistics that the reader's attention is invited here so much as to the broad fact that Japan has differentiated herself completely from "Oriental Nations" in the usually accepted sense of the term, and that her aspirations, her modes of thought, her impulses, her ideals, and her tests of conduct must now be classed, not altogether indeed but certainly in the main, as Occidental. She may be regarded as a Western nation situated on the confines of the Far East; a nation now, for the second time in its history, giving free play to the instincts of progress, of

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enterprise, and of daring which, conspicuously displayed three centuries ago, were thereafter paralysed by causes for which the Christian Occident, not the "pagan Orient," was primarily responsible.



## Appendix



## Appendix

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NOTE 1. — Mr. B. A. Chamberlain, in "Things Japanese," calls it "an innocent, not to say insipid, little *jeu de société*, such as might suggest itself to a party of school girls." He can find no explanation of the vogue it enjoyed except that Japan was "in her childhood,— her second childhood."

NOTE 2. — *Vide* "The Flowers of Japan and the Art of Floral Arrangement" by Mr. J. Conder, an exhaustive and sympathetic work which clearly sets forth the principles and practice of the art, and from which many of the details here summarised are taken.

NOTE 3. — The world of covetousness, the world of concupiscence, and the world without love.

NOTE 4. — The full names of the bucolic mime and the monkey mime were respectively *Den-gaku-no-Nô* and *Saru-gaku-no-Nô*, or the accomplishment of *Den-gaku* and of *Saru-gaku*; and since every feature distinctive of the original *Den-gaku* and *Saru-gaku* disappeared in the new development of the fourteenth century, it was natural that the names also should be abandoned.

NOTE 5. — The descendants of these celebrated *Nô* dancers and writers called themselves "Kwanze" from generation to generation, a name formed by combining the two first syllables of Kwanami and Seami.

NOTE 6. — A celebrated Chinese warrior who saved his sovereign's life by a splendid display of courage. The chorus compares Benkei to Hankai.

NOTE 7. — A pilgrim who has made at least three previous pilgrimages, acts as pioneer of each band.

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NOTE 8. — These four lines are taken bodily from a stanza by the blind poet Semi-maru. They are introduced simply because their celebrity has associated them in the minds of educated people with Osaka in Omi — not the city of Osaka — to which the chorus next refers. Japanese poetry abounds in allusions of this kind, which often defy translation, and can never be appreciated by foreigners. It should be understood that the chorus at this stage describes the journey of the pilgrims, who pace the stage rhythmically meanwhile.

NOTE 9. — Another instance of the extreme difficulty of rendering Japanese poetry into English. In the original "Itatori" and "woodman" are connected by a *jeu-de-mot* which disappears altogether in the translation.

NOTE 10. — There is here another play upon words; quite untranslatable.

NOTE 11. — Here again the force is lost. "Ata," the first part of the name "Ataka," signifies "enemy," and solely for the sake of qualifying that significance the allusion to flowers attacked by the wind is introduced.

NOTE 12. — He is called *Hogwan* in the original, but for the convenience of English readers the name "Yoshitsune" is here used.

NOTE 13. — A celebrated temple.

NOTE 14. — The Buddhists regard *a* and *um* as the quintessential sounds. The first sound made by the new-born babe is *a*; the last articulation of the dying, *um*.

NOTE 15. — The God of War, supposed to be the special tutelary deity of the Minamoto family.

NOTE 16. — One part of the chorus interprets here the thoughts of Yoshitsune; another part, those of Benkei.

NOTE 17. — Yoshitsune owed his misfortunes to slanders whispered in Yoritomo's ear by Kajiware Kagetoki.

NOTE 18. — The first line of a couplet.

NOTE 19. — The last three lines are part of the Buddhist *Yennen-mai* (life-lengthening dance), which Benkei learned when an acolyte in the Hiyeizan monastery.

NOTE 20. — Mr. B. A. Chamberlain, in his "Classical Poetry of the Japanese," has given some admirable renderings of celebrated *Kyōgen*.



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NOTE 21. — This term, originally used in the sense of a gathering, an assembly, had now become, and remains to this day, a synonym for the place where the assembly took place.

NOTE 22. — This rule has one exception. When a wrestler finds his girdle grasped on either side, he is at liberty to pass his hands under his adversary's arms and give an upward heave, thus applying a breaking strain at a point midway between the adversary's elbows and shoulders. The most celebrated wrestler that ever lived in Japan, Raiden Tamayemon (1625), is said to have snapped the bones of more than one opponent by this method, and he was ultimately forbidden to employ it. The strength required for such a feat is scarcely conceivable. It is recorded of this same Raiden that, strenuous as were his methods in the ring, he once shed tears of regret on throwing a man to whom defeat meant ruin.

NOTE 23. — This theory is thus expressed in Japan: *Taikyoku riyo-gi wo shōzu; riyo-gi shizō wo shōzu; shizō hak-kwa wo shōzu* (From chaos the two principles are born; from the two principles, the four forms; from the four forms, the eight diagrams).

NOTE 24. — This lady, Kasuga, deservedly enjoyed high favour. When Iyemitsu was in danger of being set aside for the sake of his younger brother, Kasuga saved the situation by carrying the intelligence to Iyeyasu, who was then living in retirement at Shizuoka. She eluded the vigilance of the intrigues in Yedo by pretexting a pilgrimage to the shrines of Ise.

NOTE 25. — His consort was the daughter of an eminent advocate of *Shintō*, and through her this influence made itself felt in the Yedo Court circle.

NOTE 26. — Oshio Heihachiro. He and his followers set fire to Osaka, and after a brave struggle were defeated, Oshio committing suicide.

NOTE 27. — For an admirable *résumé* of these writers' views see an essay on "The Revival of Pure *Shintō*" by the greatest authority on Japan and the Japanese, Sir E. Satow, in Volume III. of "The Asiatic Society's Proceedings."

NOTE 28. — Historians have expressed various opinions about this remarkable statesman's foreign policy. A letter written by him four years before he became *Tairō* places the

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matter beyond all doubt. "To close the country," he wrote, "is not the way to promote the national prosperity and peace. The coast defences are quite inadequate. There are no war-ships fit to cope with foreign vessels. Open the country to the strangers. Make peace with them. In the meanwhile we can complete our preparations so as to have some competence to assert ourselves. If the Americans want our coal, let them have some: there is plenty in Kiushiu. If water and fuel are needed, give them: they cost little. It is right to supply the wants of the needy. Commerce is advisable. It can be carried on through the Dutch. Treat the next comers as the Dutch were treated. Build steamers and war-ships. Train men in the art of navigation, so that we can learn the conditions of foreign nations without obtaining our knowledge through the Dutch. Save money and spend it on the navy and the army. But strictly interdict strange religions. America and Russia have made immense strides in navigation, but our people are bright and quick, and, if well trained, will find no difficulty in competing with foreigners. Provided that our country is relieved from the threat of foreign invasion and secured in the enjoyment of peace, the gods will excuse a few changes of ancient laws and customs. . . . What presses most is to free the people's minds from anxiety. Iron walls are useless unless the nation is united and calm of mind." This letter, addressed to the *Shōgun's* minister, looks commonplace to-day, but read by the light of the time when it was written, it shows wonderful perspicacity. From the views it expresses Ii Kamon-no-Kami never departed. He died for them.

NOTE 29. — Mr. Townsend Harris must be excepted from this statement. His appreciation of Japanese politics amounted almost to an intuition; partly, perhaps, because he did not consider deceit inseparable from all Oriental dealings. Alone he maintained the *bona fides* of the *Shōgun's* ministers from first to last.

NOTE 30. — Among them were men destined afterwards to take a prominent part in reconciling the nation to the very policy they then opposed so bitterly; as Prince Sanjō, Prince Konoye, and Prince Madenokōji.

NOTE 31. — *Ansei* (1854-60) was the name of the era

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when these events occurred. The judicial trial was thenceforth known as "the great judgment of *Ansei*."

NOTE 32. — This place is now the site of a large arsenal. The beautiful park still survives and attracts many visitors, but the mansion where, forty years ago, Rekkō and his clansmen discussed the possibility of setting the narrowest limits to foreign intercourse, is now the site of a big factory, telling how completely Japan has adopted foreign civilisation.

NOTE 33. — The *samurai* that committed these acts of blood had abandoned their houses and their paid service, and devoted themselves solely to a crusade in their country's cause.

NOTE 34. — *Samurai* who, as described in a previous chapter, abandoned their feudal service and became a species of knight errant for the purpose of achieving some aim, generally sanguinary.

NOTE 35. — Of the eighteen *rōnin* who assassinated Ii, one was killed in the struggle; one, who fled with the *Tairō's* head, was incapacitated by his hurts and committed suicide; three fell wounded; eight surrendered themselves, and only five escaped.

NOTE 36. — Yoshida Torajiro, announcing in a letter to his father his intention of forming a band to kill Manabe, the *Shōgun's* delegate to Kyōtō, said: "If I die in the attempt, death may be considered as life."

NOTE 37. — Foreigners settled originally at Kanagawa and subsequently moved to Yokohama, two or three miles down the bay.

NOTE 38. — It is just to note that their suspicion was never shared by the United States Representative, Mr. Townsend Harris. His belief in the sincerity of the Japanese officials never wavered, and when, after the murder of Mr. Heusken, which Mr. Harris must have felt more keenly than any of his colleagues, they decided to move their Legations from Yedo to Yokohama as a protest against the supposed duplicity and inefficiency of the *Shōgun's* officials, the American Representative remained at his post, and his declared view of the circumstances of the time showed a clearness of insight that contrasts forcibly with the ignorance of other foreigners.

NOTE 39. — Joint Note on the Political Situation and State



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of Affairs in Japan, drawn up at two conferences of the Foreign Representatives held in Yedo on the nineteenth and twenty-first of January, 1861.

NOTE 40. — British State Papers 1855-70.

NOTE 41. — The lady was not purposely spared. A sword-stroke aimed at her neck shore off a feather in her hat. This attempt to kill a woman excited much indignation among foreigners. But the writer of these pages has been assured by two of the *samurai* directly concerned in the affair, that the idea of a female being among the party of foreigners did not present itself for a moment to the men of the Satsuma escort. A foreign woman in a riding habit and a foreign man in a coat offered no points for discrimination to Japanese soldiers entirely without knowledge of aliens and their costumes.

NOTE 42. — The foreign public knew nothing of these things. They imagined that the *Shōgun* had gone to Kyōtō to receive investiture at the Emperor's hands.

NOTE 43. — The principal objection urged against it is that as the Straits of Shimo-no-seki are Japanese inland waters, foreign ships had no right to be there, and consequently could not justly complain of the treatment they received. But even if it be admitted that to open fire on a vessel flying a friendly flag is a legitimate method of remonstrating against her illegal presence, the reader will have seen, from what has been recorded above, that the act of the Chōshiu gunners was not a simple protest against trespass, but the deliberate inauguration of an attempt to terminate foreign intercourse.

NOTE 44. — Now Marquis Ito and Count Inouye, two of the leading statesmen of Japan.

NOTE 45. — Afterwards Count Goto and Count Fukuoka, prominent statesmen of the *Meiji* era.

NOTE 46. — The most prominent among these seven nobles was Prince Sanjō, afterwards prime minister under the *Meiji* Government.

NOTE 47. — France had always shown herself particularly friendly to the Tokugawa, and was therefore regarded with some distrust by the founders of the new system.







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